

2014/15 Annual Report



**Dreaming the future.
Together.**

This Annual Report is dedicated in loving memory to our friend Helen Rykens.

It feels next to impossible to distill a year in the life of a community centre into just a few pages. There is something remarkable going on every single day of the week and every single week of the year. It is a place of amazing conviction and where our commitment to service, space and leadership is evidenced every day. It is a place where connections are made, opportunities seized, and where we dream together of a better future.

Those who intersect with The 519 are diverse in age, gender, ability, education and way of life. They include dancers, self-help groups, community organizers, choirs, orchestras, activists, artists, sports enthusiasts, and health promoters. Some are staff members, some are leaders within the LGBTQ community, some are individuals who never saw themselves as leaders but are, and some are learning to lead. Collectively, we are pursuing our dreams of a more just and inclusive world while at the same time working hard to respond to the needs of those most marginalized in our communities here and now. We dream. We act.

Looking ahead, The 519 has big dreams.

We are imagining borders that serve to welcome LGBTQ newcomers from around the world – where the very notion of border crossing represents something beautiful and freeing. A world that acknowledges what newcomers bring with them is as powerful and important as what they have left behind.

We are dreaming of classrooms and community spaces where young people are able to realize their full potential – to become the best of who they already know themselves to be. Spaces where being queer and trans-identified is honoured and families are able to safely define themselves. At the same time we are dreaming of queer spaces where we can grow old in, spaces that include our chosen families and respect and reflect our diversity and our desires.

We are imagining a new Recreation Centre that raises the bar on accessibility and inclusion in sport for all people. A place where queerness is celebrated, where every kind of body is celebrated, where the signs on the locker room doors serve only to welcome you inside and a space where we are all the most valuable players.

We are dreaming and we are acting, too. The following pages represent a fraction of the ways that we are working toward realizing our collective dreams for the future, a fraction of which we share here with pride and awe and gratitude.

To all of you who connect with The 519 – from our program participants, community partners, neighbours, volunteers, donors, sponsors and friends – thank you for your support and for dreaming the future with us.

Sincerely,



Margo Foster
Chair



Maura Lawless
Executive Director



Here, you are among friends.

Newcomers & Refugee Programs

More than a decade ago, we made a commitment to support LGBTQ newcomers and refugees to Canada. One of the fastest growing programs at The 519, 'Settling In' facilitates networking opportunities, nutritious meals, cultural experiences, settlement counselling, and vital referrals to the hundreds of LGBTQ newcomers who meet weekly at The 519. Our program works with LGBTQ newcomers over a number of years and creates opportunities for volunteerism and mentorship that help them integrate as new Canadians.

Seventy percent of program participants are refugee claimants. They come from over 72 countries and speak more than 50 languages. The remaining thirty percent are convention refugees, permanent residents and live-in caregivers.

Recent changes to Canada's Immigration and Refugee Law has created a rapid application process that means an even greater number of LGBTQ newcomers who have resided in Canada for less than a year did not have nearly enough time to get the support necessary to prepare for their hearings while dealing with substantial emotional, social, and physical health issues. Our work with these communities clearly show that newcomers are facing far more complex issues than in previous years which means we need to expand our program and do even more to respond to the needs we see everyday.

The realities facing LGBTQ people internationally seem even more urgent at this moment in time. As we set our future program priorities we remain grounded, in the principles of social justice for all. We also recognize that our program services must include a better understanding of the experiences of violence, trauma and re-traumatization, isolation and poverty faced by many in our community as we continue to work to advance LGBTQ human rights here in Canada and around the world.

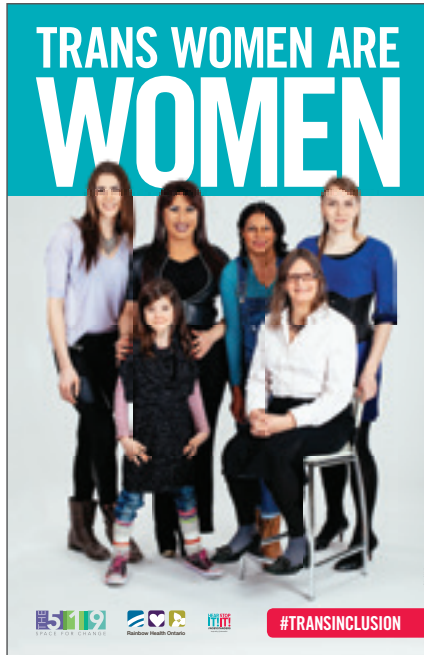
"Arriving in Canada three years ago, I struggled with culture shock and feeling like an outsider. The 519 gave me a comfortable place to connect with other gay newcomers dealing with similar issues, as well as a place where I could volunteer and be part of programs like Among Friends. Thanks to The 519 I feel included, I feel familiar."

— Illya Tinker, program participant, proud 519 member

1,257
NUMBER OF
SETTLEMENT
PROGRAM
PARTICIPANTS

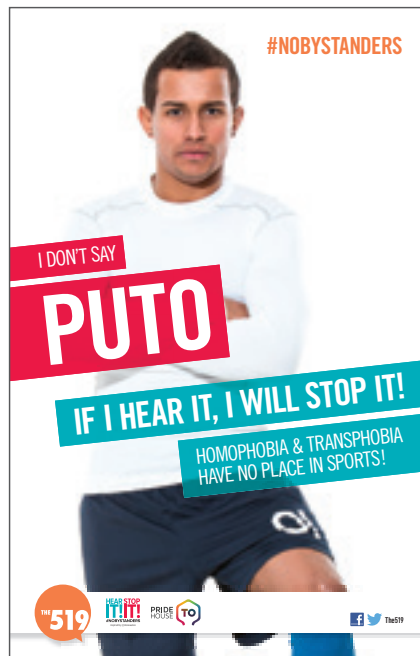
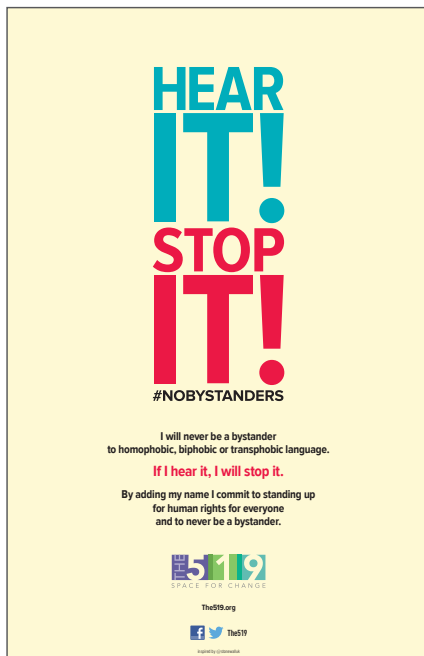
80%
OF THE CLIENTS
WE WORK WITH ARE
SUCCESSFUL
IN THEIR REFUGEE
CLAIMS

TOP TEN COUNTRIES
OF ORIGIN FOR
LGBTQ REFUGEES
TO CANADA:
NIGERIA, JAMAICA,
THE BAHAMAS,
UGANDA, BARBADOS,
CAMEROON,
UKRAINE, SRI LANKA,
TURKEY,
RUSSIA/IRAN



The Trans Inclusion Matters campaign (I), developed in partnership with Rainbow Health Ontario, promotes inclusive spaces and services for trans people.

The Respect Your Elders campaign (r) was designed to address older LGBTQ issues. This work is delivered in partnership with Toronto's Senior Pride Network.



Our Hear It! Stop It! campaign has reached thousands of individuals and provided training to secure welcoming, safe and inclusive spaces at work, school, hospitals and sport and recreation.

Education & Training

The past year has seen significant growth within our education and training work. We have taken up leadership to support efforts that promote diversity and inclusion and bring about sustainable, measurable and tangible change, both at a societal level, and in the workplace. We have an amazing team of trainers who bring an incredible breadth of experience, passion and courage to the work that we do, and we learn from them every day.

Over this past year we have supported the diversity and inclusion efforts of a wide range of organizations; from hospitals and care environments; to shelters and housing organizations; to municipal and provincial government departments in Toronto, across Ontario and beyond. We have shared our advocacy work and resources, including our Hear It! Stop It! NoBystanders campaign and Respect Your Elders campaign with partners from across Canada, enabling the message to be shared in communities from Prince Edward Island to Ottawa to Saskatoon to Vancouver.

We are heartened by the conversations that are taking place in the training room and by the growing number of people who are standing up for LGBTQ rights and taking the pledge to never be a bystander to homophobic or transphobic language and bullying.

As our work expands in this area, we have set our dreams on a future where LGBTQ people of all ages feel safe to come out, where families are free to define themselves, and where young people do not become homeless and have to experience poverty, despair and fear. We dream of a world where human rights legislation is enacted in a way that creates real safety and inclusion for trans people and where no one experiences isolation, violence or discrimination because of who they are.

7,555
PEOPLE ATTENDED
INCLUSION
TRAINING
SESSIONS
OFFERED BY THE 519

**We help organizations
create space where everyone
can be themselves.**



Children & Youth

Children and youth are at the heart of so much of what we do at The 519. They show us fun, creative and dynamic ways to respond to challenges and the world around us.

In our Family Resource Centre, we welcome hundreds of children, their parents and caregivers, each week. Through our programs and special events, we provide safe and inclusive spaces for queer and trans parents and gender-independent kids.

We are working with newcomer youth through the Youth Engagement and Student Newcomer Access Program and we have developed a strong network of partnerships and contacts in both the settlement and LGBTQ sectors. We have worked with youth in over 20 schools, offering a unique opportunity for youth to engage in dynamic and interactive workshops that challenge them to broaden their cultural perspectives, improve cross-cultural communication skills, and build multicultural competence. Correspondingly, our programs help newcomer youth think critically about LGBTQ accessibility, and offer access to a full range of programs and services through The 519.

The 519's Housing Support Services program offers support to LGBTQ-identified youth experiencing homelessness or at-risk for homelessness through youth-centred and non-judgmental one on one case management. Our services include eviction prevention, accessing shelter systems/transitional housing programs, and support in searching for safe and affordable housing. We believe that youth are an important pillar in our community, and that it is our role as adult mentors and allies to provide them with the skills and assets they need to grow and thrive.

We are proud of the work we do in support of children and youth, but it is only a starting place. We know that LGBTQ young people face discrimination and isolation. The real work is creating the world we imagine, a world where all young people are safe and free to be themselves, a world where they have what they need to reach for, and realize, their dreams and their full potential.



**It gets better
when we make it better.**

Support Services

Through our programs and services, partnerships and community-led groups, The 519 is engaged in a range of support services including: face-to-face and group counselling, outreach programs, sexual health interventions, anti-violence initiatives, legal information, and access to a network of LGBTQ competent community referral options.

Our capacity to respond to the needs of some of the most marginalized members of our community is made possible by a team of amazing volunteer counsellors who donate their time and expertise to facilitate free counselling sessions to individuals, couples and groups, as well as through staff and peer support interventions that take place during our weekly drop-in programs. Improved access to culturally competent and trauma-informed support continues to be one of our key priorities.

Unwelcoming school climates, employment discrimination, and barriers to accessing quality health care continue to pose challenges for the LGBTQ community - particularly for queer and trans people of colour. We continue to evolve our programs and services to reflect the diversity within our communities while acknowledging that many of the barriers faced by LGBTQ individuals are linked to significant systemic and institutional discrimination that must be challenged and changed.

Ensuring the support is available to those who need it here and now, while working to create the future we want, is a delicate balance that requires us to act and listen in tandem and in doing so we become a more effective and resilient organization.

"The service I received was exceptional, professional, sensitive and highly useful for my healing and growth. The 519 counseling service was invaluable to me."

— Anonymous

1,038
COUNSELLING
SESSIONS

27%
INCREASE IN
NUMBER OF
COUNSELLING
SESSIONS OFFERED TO
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS

ACROSS ALL OF
OUR PROGRAMS
WE PROVIDED
21,201
FREE MEALS
TO OUR PROGRAM
PARTICIPANTS



**We meet people where they
are at and support them to
decide where they want to go.**





Salah Bachir and k.d. lang at The 519 Annual Gala



Partying for a cause, Green Space Festival



James Bailey performing at All Black Lives Matter, Revival!
What Love Looks Like in Public



Joey Arias channeling Billie Holiday, Jazz in the Park,
PrideHouseTO

Celebration

The 519 provides free, accessible and accepting space where individuals and organizations can gather, meet, work and celebrate together.

From hosting community or partnership events, to organizing our own special events, like the Green Space Festival and our Annual Gala, The 519 enables and creates opportunities that allow for the health, happiness and full participation of our LGBTQ communities.



Mayor John Tory, Premier Kathleen Wynne at Starry Night, Green Space Festival.

286,957
PEOPLE
INTERSECTED WITH
THE 519 THROUGH
OUR WORK

289
REGULAR
COMMUNITY
SPACE USERS

1,326
VOLUNTEERS

**We provide space for
our communities to come
together to celebrate.**



A place for all in sport.

Pictured (l-r): Canadian soccer champion Erin McLeod; Catherine Meade and David Morris, Co-chairs PrideHouseTO; Laura Dottori-Attanasio, Chief Risk Officer, CIBC; Drew Fagan, Deputy Minister responsible for the Pan and Parapan, and Deputy Minister of Tourism; Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam – at the launch of PrideHouseTO

Sports Inclusion

For many, recreational sport can be the first time they experience exclusion and discrimination, whether in the gym, the change room, on the playground or in the stands. Given the incredible potential for sport to lift people up and bring people together, it's vital that we work to make these early recreational experiences supportive, inclusive and accessible.

In support of our ambitions for sports inclusion, and with the eyes of the sporting world on Toronto during the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games, we were proud to trustee PrideHouseTO, a community-engagement project that brought together 15 organizations from the business, government, labour, education and community services sectors, along with the City of Toronto and Pan Am Games partners to make TORONTO 2015 the most LGBTQ-inclusive multi-sport games in history.

Over 35,000 people experienced PrideHouseTO over 18 days where we demonstrated to the Pan American Sport Organization and the world what inclusion during a large-scale sporting event can look like. We believed it was not enough to talk and celebrate athletes coming out at the elite and professional levels – we believed it was essential to create local and recreational sport environments that are welcoming and accessible to people of all identities, ages and ability levels. PrideHouseTO and The 519 brought together 50 delegates from global organizations for The 519 Sport Inclusion Summit. Over three days we focused on developing a unified Sports Inclusion Task Force and identified preliminary recommendations to inform a Recreational Inclusion Playbook.

81%
OF PARTICIPANTS
IN A RECENT SURVEY
HAD WITNESSED
OR EXPERIENCED
HOMOPHOBIA,
BIPHOBIA,
TRANSPHOBIA,
IN SPORT



The 519's Kristina Flynn (l) and Maura Lawless (r) with MMA fighter Fallon Fox – at the Sports Inclusion Summit

Our sports inclusion ambitions are also emboldened by the work we are doing in partnership with the City of Toronto to investigate the feasibility of building a new Recreation Centre at Moss Park. The Recreation Centre will focus on creating a transformational facility that will enhance the existing recreational space and programs provided at Moss Park, and at the same time be dedicated to advancing LGBTQ inclusion in sport and recreation. When we make space accessible for the LGBTQ communities, we make it accessible for all.

**“FOR ALL OF US
THIS INSTANT AND THIS TRIUMPH
WE WERE NEVER **MEANT TO SURVIVE.**”**
- AUDRE LORDE



The 519 celebrates International Women's Day and continues to **fight for the rights of all women** – today and every day.

**IT GETS BETTER
WHEN WE MAKE
IT BETTER**



#SUPPORTSEXED

#AllBlackLivesMatter

The 519 celebrated International Women's Day (top) with a series of events. Our communities came together to promote a better understanding of the new sex ed curriculum (l). Partnering with Sunset Service Toronto Fellowship, The 519 hosted #AllBlackLivesMatter, a program of events to explore issues faced by black communities.

Leadership & Advocacy

We are proud of the role we play as community leaders in making the world a better place. We know that taking up leadership often presents more questions than it does answers.

How do we address systemic discrimination and violence faced by the trans community? How do we prevent queer and trans youth from taking their own lives and ensure our education curriculum represents our lives? How do we ensure our immigration system adequately and compassionately responds to LGBTQ asylum seekers? How do we create safe environments for our community to age in? Inclusive spaces for our community to play in? How do we challenge racism within our community and instil in ourselves and our work that black lives matter? How do we acknowledge and address the painful realities of trauma that so many of us carry with us and encounter in our work together?

As leaders, we understand that we do not work alone. Achieving social change is a collective effort that requires accountability, courage and the need to listen to those most impacted. It is through the incredible work of community members, our Board, staff, volunteers and external partners, all of whom dare to dream of a better world, that we continue to set the bar high and then work tirelessly to raise it.

Making decisions about where to focus our resources and where our efforts will have the most impact is one of the biggest challenges we face. This year we focused on a number of initiatives that addressed urgent important community issues, including our advocacy campaigns for All Black Lives Matter, Trans Women Are Women, International Women's Day, Respect Your Elders and Support Sex Ed.

We know there is so much more work to do. In 2016 we will continue our commitment to galvanize around important community issues, as well as develop our capacity to engage and advocate effectively. This includes thinking thoughtfully and strategically about how and when we lead, and how and when we listen and support the diverse voices and experiences that are often not always considered or heard.

**We are standing on
the shoulders of giants.**

The Impact of Philanthropy

By demonstrating their belief in importance of The 519 through philanthropy, donors, sponsors and community partners help us realize even great impacts for the LGBTQ communities we serve. In the past five years, the contribution of philanthropic revenues derived from our diverse fundraising programs has grown from 20% of budget in 2010 to 55% in 2014. Without the financial support of our communities, The 519 could not offer the breadth of programs and services we currently do, nor could we dream of a future where even bigger and better things happen for our community are possible.

"When we considered all that The 519 has done and meant to our family over the years we were delighted to give back."

— **Leonard Molczadski and his sister Annette Moll**

Our Donors

The 519 is proud to recognize and celebrate the donors and funders who made financial gifts to support the work we do. Thank you.

Major Funding Partners



**Thank you for making
dreams possible.**

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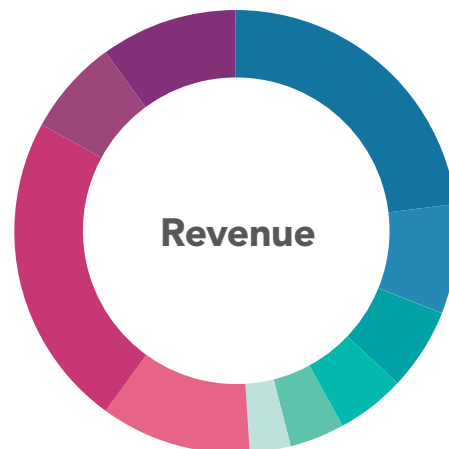
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2014 2013

Revenue

Core City of Toronto Funding	1,229,436	1,211,090
Community Partnership Investment	4,108,495	3,182,552
Government Grants		
City of Toronto	461,314	295,034
Government of Ontario	317,281	108,731
Government of Canada	274,644	264,940
Philanthropy		
United Way	234,100	231,145
Foundation Grants	136,615	80,682
Donations & Special Events	610,509	381,467
Green Space Festival	1,208,346	756,250
Special Projects	354,231	566,760
Productive Enterprise	511,455	497,543
TOTAL REVENUE	5,337,931	4,393,642



Expenses

Core Funded Expenses	1,229,436	1,211,090
Centre Administration	307,359	299,475
Information & Referral	295,064	291,847
Building Maintenance	442,597	432,372
Program Support	184,416	187,396
Partnership Expenses	4,099,032	3,277,376
Community Engagement	149,481	86,804
Fundraising & Events	306,935	226,368
Green Space Festival	773,995	514,940
Sport & Recreation Initiatives	525,646	115,237
Children & Family Programs	188,717	149,800
Community Drop-In Programs	331,417	374,589
Education & Training	289,501	160,143
Newcomer & Refugee Services	321,569	281,421
Counselling & Support	135,450	110,898
Social Enterprise	564,074	614,867
Special Projects	434,012	566,760
Depreciation	78,235	75,549
TOTAL EXPENSES	5,328,468	4,488,466





2014-2015 Board of Management of The 519

Margo Foster, Chair
Jacob Porpossian, Vice Chair
Tom Lewis, Treasurer
Luc Levasseur, Secretary

Nadia Bello (inset)
Paul Bent
Daniel Boyer
Tyler Fleming
(resigned within term)

Nicki Monahan
Michelle Walker
Wesley Watson
Kristyn Wong-Tam
(not pictured)





The519

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The 519 is an agency of the City of Toronto

Registered Charitable No.
11931 0761 RR0001