



WE'RE HERE WE'RE QUEER



About The 519

A building condemned to be demolished in the early 70s was saved by the organized efforts of our communities. It was consequently purchased by the City of Toronto to establish a community centre to serve the neighbourhood, and The 519 was born in 1975.

A gay youth group first applied to use our space in 1976 – a request that initially met with a split vote between queer and straight board members. It was a then-closeted bisexual board member who cast the deciding vote in favour of the youth group. The rest, as they say, is history.

Today, The 519 is the most prominent LGBTQ2S service provider and community centre in Canada, with an innovative model of Service, Space, and Leadership.

We are committed to the health, happiness, and full participation of LGBTQ2S communities in Toronto and beyond through our programs, services, community engagement activities, capacity-building initiatives, and advocacy.

Learn more about us and our history at The519.org.



Action = Life

MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



Our communities are not new to challenges. We are also not new to resistance. When we look back, what really stands out are the ways in which our communities have always come together to rise and resist – to demand change and reject violence. It is our communities that are not only our cause, but also our main driving force.

Our three-year Strategic Action Plan (2019-2021) was approved earlier this year, establishing three main strategic themes:

- » Defining our future, responding to our context, affecting systemic change
- » Responding to vulnerability, fostering self-determination
- » Sustainable organizational practice, impact through investment

Guided by these core strategic themes, we continued to advance our work this year. Our long-standing programs and services, community engagement initiatives, and space use evolved and expanded, with many new initiatives introduced in response to the existing and emerging needs of the communities we serve.

With new funding secured from Status of Women Canada for our Anti-Violence Initiatives (AVI), we are focused on building critical strategic pieces of this work to improve outcomes for our communities, in the short and long run. Some of the work this year includes building new tools and partnerships for immediate crisis support, launching broader advocacy strategies, developing sector capacity-

building initiatives, and engaging mainstream media to advocate against violence impacting LGBTQ2S communities.

Ontario's youth and educators suffered a major blow in 2018 with the repeal of the updated sex-ed curriculum that included gender identity and sexual orientation. We fought back and centred youth and educators' voices through our advocacy campaign. In 2019, this work grew into a platform for youth activism, leading to many new initiatives, including our Youth Social Justice Summer Camp at The 519.

We also organized rapidly against the provincial government's sudden and drastic cuts to Legal Aid Ontario for refugees and immigrants. Working alongside our allies and partners, we launched an advocacy campaign against the cuts. With funding from the Law Foundation of Ontario, we also created a new senior leadership position to urgently advance our Access to Justice programming through partnership development, legal clinic expansion, and resource development.

There is a lot more work that needs to be done and a long way to go, especially in the context of rising right-wing extremism, a populist political climate, and mounting pressure of poverty further marginalizing already vulnerable communities.

As we continue to rise and resist, and as we march ahead towards impacting and demanding change, we want to thank our supporters, partners, donors, funders, and volunteers. You have stood by us and your support for The 519 reflects your commitment to the communities we serve. And for that we are forever grateful.

Maura Lawless
Executive Director

David Morris
Board Chair



SILENCE IS VIOLENCE

Our Work in 2018 / 2019¹

This year we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising. The 519 has been at the forefront of the struggle for LGBTQ2S human rights in Canada for 44 of those 50 years. Much progress has been made, but we continue to fight for equity and justice.

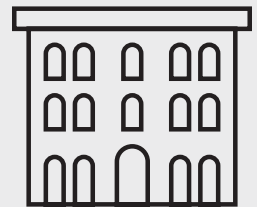
Our communities continue to exist on the margins and are more likely to live in poverty than their straight, cisgender counterparts.² Higher incidence of poverty, and persistent social and systemic discrimination based on intersecting factors (including sexual orientation, gender identity, racial identity, immigration status, and socio-economic status) continue to create barriers that limit our communities' access to critical services. Major funding cuts by the Government of Ontario, increase in targeted violence, and the rise of right-wing extremism and xenophobia continue to intensify the daily struggles our communities face.

The 519 remains committed to offering space that is accessible and inclusive, programs and services that serve the existing and emerging needs of marginalized LGBTQ2S communities, and leadership that works to break down barriers and create opportunities.

SPACE USE

583,074

visits to
The 519



103,757

visits to programs
led by The 519

226

community-led
groups hosted

5,477

community
meetings held

110,997

information and referral
requests at the front desk

LGBTQ REFUGEE SETTLEMENT

6,672

visits to settlement-related workshops



718

LGBTQ refugee claimants received one-on-one support



LGBTQ NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT

1,089

LGBTQ newcomers received one-on-one support³

OLDER LGBTQ2S DROP-IN PROGRAM

1,417

visits to weekly drop-in program

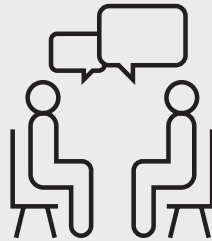
TRAUMA-INFORMED COUNSELLING

860

individual and couples counselling sessions completed

120

single-session drop-in counselling sessions completed



YOUTH HOUSING SUPPORT

147

LGBTQ2S youth accessed housing support



EARLYON CHILD & FAMILY DROP-IN PROGRAM

14,460

visits by children, families, and caregivers



FOOD SECURITY

28,658

free meals served in programs by FABARNAK, our community café

CLOTHING EXCHANGE INITIATIVES

1,860

people accessed our clothing exchange drives



EDUCATION & TRAINING

314

inclusion training workshops delivered in 85 organizations

55

EarlyON sites engaged by Glitterbug – LGBTQ2S EarlyON Mobile Program⁴

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

100+

youth participated in Mic Drop, a youth-led social justice conference for students and teachers



160

engagements in Kids and Youth Action and Arts Space programs (KAAS & YAAS)

PEER LEADERSHIP

371

visits to Trans People of Colour (TPOC) weekly drop-in program

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

254

clients accessed legal clinics supported by 18 volunteer lawyers

MOSS PARK COMMUNITY

150

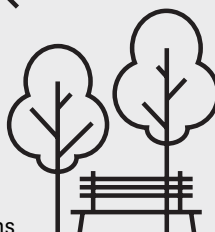
youth participated in Youth in Power Conference, 2019

350

families participated in Back to School Bash, 2018

125

participants in sewing and hair-cutting skill-building programs



¹ All numbers quoted are for a 12-month period (2018/19) unless specified otherwise

² lgbtqhealth.ca

³ Convention refugees, permanent residents, and live-in caregivers

⁴ April – June, 2019



THE PEOPLE UNITED

Advocacy Campaigns 2018 / 2019

Army of Lovers was launched on International Women's Day 2019 in a public event in which youth, educators, activists, and community leaders came together to highlight the increased vulnerability of queer and trans youth to gender-based violence.



"My voice rings down through thousands of years,
to coil around your body and give you strength,
you who have wept in direct sunlight,
who have hungered in invisible chains,
tremble to the cadence of my legacy:
an army of lovers shall not fail."

- Rita Mae Brown

Army of Lovers

We used Rita Mae's iconic and inspiring words to name our advocacy campaign, which focuses on organizing around issues that impact LGBTQ2S communities across Ontario.

In April 2019, the provincial government announced a 30% reduction in Legal Aid Ontario's budget, leaving refugees without accessible legal assistance to support their hearing and appeals processes. The 519's Army of Lovers immediately mobilized to create awareness about this issue. We are also prioritizing support for LGBTQ refugees in our Access to Justice programming by expanding our legal clinics and rallying effective referrals.



Poster artwork by Maia Boakye



Our Army of Lovers mobilized following incidents of hate-filled anti-LGBTQ2S rhetoric in our neighbourhood. Our Direct Services team offered immediate counselling support and crisis referral information, and our Anti-Violence Initiatives team developed and distributed mobilization kits across the neighbourhood, shared useful safety information, and advocated against the incidents in mainstream media.

www.ArmOfLovers.ca

If you would like to be kept informed about any safety and/or community-based mobilization efforts, reach us at avi@The519.org.



Army of Lovers featured in the media

82%

of educators view schools unsafe for trans kids⁵

72%

of educators view schools unsafe for LGB students⁵

95%

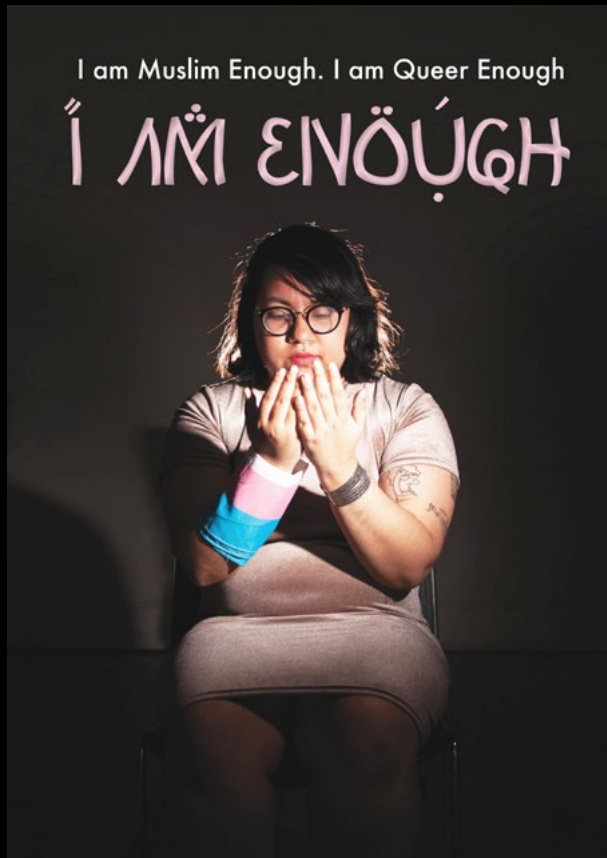
of The 519 LGBTQ refugee program participants rely on Legal Aid for their claims. No Legal Aid support will lead to more denied claims and consequently, to persecution of queer and trans people.

⁵ The Every Teacher Project, 2015

ALL THE WOMEN, 2019

Guests at the Army of Lovers launch event also interacted with a crowd-sourced exhibit of portraits and words of strength on International Women's Day 2019.





I Am Enough

I am Enough is a public awareness campaign against Islamophobia launched in partnership with Unity Mosque, OCASI Positive Spaces Initiative, and Salaam Canada. The campaign shares inspiring stories of queer and trans Muslims in Canada. Their intersecting identities, experiences of Islamophobia, racism, homophobia and transphobia, the risks of visibility and the tragedy of invisibility – these are some of the subjects we are exploring through this ongoing series of posters and stories.

www.The519.org/IAmEnough

Proud to be Me

The Proud to be Me campaign was developed by Glitterbug for EarlyON centres across the city, child care environments, schools, and other spaces accessed by children and their families. This campaign celebrates the beautiful diversity that exists among children, young people, and their families.

Developing these posters was a true labour of love for us. The 519 staff volunteered to share sketches of how they saw themselves as kids. The kids in the Proud to be Me posters are those kids; they are The 519. This campaign is a celebration of our staff, and a powerful representation of all those kids who might not see themselves represented or celebrated.

www.The519.org/ProudToBeMe



Artwork by Light Up The Sky

LGBTQ2S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS



The 519 Refugee Pride Party, 2019

Featured Programs and Services

01 LGBTQ Refugee and Newcomer Settlement Support

Our LGBTQ Refugee and Newcomer Settlement Support programs went through significant enhancements in the year 2018/19, in alignment with our Strategic Action Plan and in response to the emerging needs of our communities.

LGBTQ newcomers already face additional barriers to settlement due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, racial identity, history of violence and trauma, and the dearth of queer and trans competent health and settlement services. The funding cuts to Legal Aid Ontario further intensified the pressure on queer and trans refugee claimants, increasing their risk of deportation and consequent persecution.

★ Highlights 2018 / 2019

Newcomer Orientation for LGBTQ newcomers

1,500

newcomers registered to learn about their rights and responsibilities, settlement needs, and available services.

Among Friends program for LGBTQ refugee claimants

6,672

visits made by refugee claimants to access settlement information, build community and share a meal. Childminding services during program sessions were introduced to improve accessibility.

Next Steps program for LGBTQ convention refugees and permanent residents

200

newcomers participated to explore a range of topics related to settlement.

One-on-one settlement support

718

LGBTQ refugee claimants and

1,089

LGBTQ convention refugees and permanent residents received one-on-one settlement support to identify their settlement needs, develop plans, and connect to relevant programs and services.

- » **Mental Health Support for Refugee Claimants**
Program participants had access to peer-led support groups, short-term individual and couples counselling, and weekly single-session drop-in counselling.

- » **Access to Justice Programming**
In response to the urgent needs of LGBTQ refugee claimants, we introduced the new role of Director, Public Interest and Legal Initiatives. This position is focused on expanding legal clinics, building partnerships, and developing public legal education resources to support refugee claimants' access to justice.

- » **Application Clinics**
To foster self-determination and skill-building, we launched bi-monthly application clinics for LGBTQ newcomers. With support from staff, clients begin their application process for permanent residence or citizenship, followed by one-on-one sessions to review and finalize their applications.

- » **Student Newcomer Access Program**
This program engaged **750** newcomer youth through collaborative programming to support them through the transitional period of immigration and adolescence.

- » **Fuel - Sports Inclusion**
Fuel is a free sports and recreation program for LGBTQ2S communities offered in collaboration with the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education and Hart House at the University of Toronto. Since its launch in 2018, the program has increased its focus on sports and recreation inclusion for LGBTQ refugees and newcomers.



The 519 Refugee Pride Party, 2019



Artwork by NAD for Vital Voices – arts-based mental health group at The 519, in partnership with InkWell Workshops, 2018.

02

Trauma-Informed Counselling Support

In addition to our regular trauma-informed counselling programming, we introduced drop-in counselling sessions during Sunday Drop-in, Meal Trans, and Older LGBTQ2S drop-in programs. Weekly drop-in counselling was introduced for LGBTQ refugees and newcomers. We also launched new group initiatives and developed robust LGBTQ2S-friendly referral resources for additional support.

★ Highlights 2018 / 2019

860

short-term counselling sessions completed

120

single-session drop-in counselling provided during various programs

160

people attended weekly Healing Yoga for LGBTQ2S women, two-spirit, transfeminine and non-binary people

- » Launched **AFFIRM**, an eight-week affirmative cognitive behaviour therapy group focused on reducing depression, enhancing coping skills, and building sexual self-efficacy for LGBTQ2S youth and adults.



Healing Yoga for LGBTQ2S women, two-spirit, transfeminine and non-binary people.





WE SHALL OVERCOME SOME DAY

The emotional trauma of not being able to live a safe and authentic life with her partner in Jamaica was getting unbearable. So Chris⁶ made the difficult decision to leave behind her partner of nine years and come to Canada to find a way for them to live together – openly and safely.



After completing her professional training as an acupuncturist and receiving a rejection on her application for a work permit, Chris was out of options. She had invested three years of her life, spent her entire life's savings, and chosen to live so far away from her love – just to find a safe place to call home. Going back to the same life of fear was not an option.

"In Jamaica, one night as we were leaving a party together, a group of people started following us, hurling homophobic slurs and threatening to rape us. I fell and hurt my leg. Afterwards, I decided to get a tattoo where the fall had left a scar – 'only God can judge me'."

It was a challenging time for Chris. Struggling to find a way to stay in the country and make a living, she fell into a deep depression. With support from The 519 and Legal Aid Ontario, she was finally able to file her refugee claim in 2018. Attending **Among Friends**, our weekly LGBTQ refugee support group, practising meditation, and being able to access free therapy helped her through those terribly tough times.

"We pay attention to the stories of abuse and talk about refugees' needs for settlement support. But we also need to focus on the mental and emotional needs of refugees who have endured so much emotional trauma and continue to experience mounting barriers in their quest for safety – leaving them so vulnerable to mental health issues."

Chris waited a year for her hearing, which ended with a delayed decision. Her experience made her realize how critical it was for refugees to have legal support to prepare them for their hearing, which is a highly challenging and emotional process.

"If you have lived your entire life hiding in a homophobic state, it is very difficult to prove your sexual orientation. You don't have police reports to show for the abuse you have experienced. And it is a nerve-racking moment for the claimant whose entire life depends on the decision."

Chris finally received a successful decision after two months. She is employed and feels relatively more settled than before. The fear for the safety of her partner, and the homophobia that she continues to experience systemically and socially are still her present-day realities. Although she feels she still has a long way to go before she feels safe enough to live her authentic life, she knows she is in a much better place to deal with the challenges that lie ahead.

"I look forward to being reunited with my partner and to live my dream in Canada."

⁶ Pseudonym used for privacy and safety of the participant.

03

Youth Housing Support

The ongoing housing crisis in Toronto takes a disproportionate toll on queer and trans youth. LGBTQ2S youth remain largely overrepresented in the homeless youth population, with estimates that as many as 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ2S. As part of our efforts to offer support in such times of crisis, we have been working to develop a robust referral system and explore innovative ways to find affordable and LGBTQ2S-friendly housing.

Roommate Mixer, 2019

★ Highlights 2018 / 2019

147

youth accessed housing support program



33%

were successfully housed⁷

- » Established new connections with **11** community agencies to help expedite housing support for youth.
- » **The Roommate Mixer** was launched as a creative solution to the relentless housing crisis. The program offers a space for LGBTQ2S youth and adults to meet other queer, trans and two-spirit people looking for roommates. The program is attended by up to **30** people per month.

⁷ Including transitional housing



THIS LOVE OF MINE

They came to Canada to live together as partners without fear or stigma. But finding an affordable place to live, especially as newcomers, was a significant challenge.



Kaan (left), Eren (right)

Eren and Kaan have been together for three years. In Turkey, it was not possible for them to be out and open as a couple. They found other 'acceptable' ways to be together – as roommates, co-workers, and friends. Their quest to be able to live their authentic lives brought them to Canada in 2019, and finding a place to call home was the first thing on their minds.

"Without a job, credit history, or references, finding a place to live is very difficult for newcomers, especially LGBTQ newcomers," Kaan explained.

They were referred to The 519's **Roommate Mixer**, where LGBTQ2S communities can find friendly and supportive living spaces in the face of Toronto's escalating housing crisis. In the very first session they were able to meet their match – a community member looking to rent out a room to queer folks.

"It's a real home and we are so excited."

With their housing issue resolved and their refugee claim filed, both Eren and Kaan are excited about starting their new lives. They love meeting new people and can't wait to grow their connections in their newfound community.

Eren's eyes light up when he talks about their future plans and dreams.

"We want to open a Turkish café in Toronto so everyone can have amazing Turkish coffee."

To leave the world they grew up in and start a new life from scratch was a tough decision, but one they don't regret. They continue to be involved with The 519 as program participants and volunteers.

"After connecting with The 519 and members of the LGBTQ2S community, we finally feel that it is so great to be gay."



Older LGBTQ2S Drop-in Program Pride Party, 2019

04

Older LGBTQ2S Drop-in Program

Our Older LGBTQ2S Drop-in Program continued to grow over the last year, with increased engagement and attendance. The program offers nutritious food, social opportunities, intergenerational interactions, and engaging presentations and workshops for older LGBTQ2S adults.

★ Highlights 2018 / 2019

- » Increased engagement on subjects including social justice, civic engagement, consent, Indigenous reconciliation, and activism.
- » Weekly drop-in counselling support introduced during program.
- » **bOlder Together**
43 participants engaged (since April 2019) in bOlder Together, a new project offering monthly intergenerational skill-building workshops and community events with a focus on holistic well-being and mental health.
- » **Pals Connect Friendly Visiting Program**
175 social visits made by **15** trained volunteers to **10** self-identified socially isolated older LGBTQ2S adults in this friendly visiting program. Pals Connect was recognized by York University's international age-equitable communities research project in 2019 for promising organizational practices in the development and delivery of seniors' programs and services.



bOlder Together intergenerational workshop – Planting for Medicines, 2019

SOLIDARITY FOREVER

Lawrence happily calls himself a “Proud Gay Grampy.” Bob cherishes being raised by older drag queen mothers. They instantly connected as friends after being paired through The 519’s Pals Connect Friendly Visiting Program.

Lawrence and Bob meet every week at a café in the Village. They seem to have a lot in common – including wit and a strong sense of humour. Another thing they have in common is the experience of social isolation.

Lawrence spent most of his life in Winnipeg until he came out to his family at age 44. He moved to Toronto 13 years ago to explore his new out life. He lives by himself in the Village and recently had to retire from his job because of health issues. As a self-proclaimed workaholic, it was a shocking change for him.

Feeling the pressure of isolation, Lawrence decided to participate in the **Older LGBTQ2S Drop-in Program** at The 519. He was looking for a social activity in a smaller group setting and decided to explore **Pals Connect** as a program participant.

“Loneliness has such stigma attached to it. It is real for older queer people living alone.”

Bob grew up in Calgary under the wing of senior drag queens. Although his journey has been different than Lawrence’s, he recently found himself reevaluating his professional and personal paths.

“You lose a lot of friends when you decide to change your life.”

Bob has been engaged with The 519 as a program participant in various community engagement activities including mindfulness programs and **Sew What?**, a skill-building sewing workshop. He has also been volunteering to support various programs at The 519 throughout the year. The volunteer opportunity with Pals Connect instantly appealed to him.

“We are able to be open and out today because of the struggles and sacrifices of older queer and trans people. It’s time for the younger generation to acknowledge that and do something for them.”

Lawrence and Bob support each other in moments when reassurance is needed and feel that they balance each other. Lawrence’s own experience with drastic life changes helps him relate to Bob, and Bob’s respect for and association with older queer and trans people make him a dedicated friend.

Bob (left), Lawrence (right)





05

Glitterbug - LGBTQ2S EarlyON Mobile Program

Glitterbug is a new initiative of The 519's EarlyON Child and Family Centre. It is a unique mobile program that works with EarlyON centres across Toronto to promote inclusion and affirmation of gender and sexual diversity in children and families.

Services offered by Glitterbug include consultation, program development support, pop-up visits, capacity building workshops, and development of resources for EarlyON centres in Toronto. Since its rollout in 2019, the program has engaged **55** EarlyON sites across the city.



EarlyON Child and Family Centre at The 519

PRIDE AGAINST PREJUDICE

Fifteen years ago, Children's Place EarlyON Child and Family Centre invited The 519 to deliver inclusion training for their team after Melanie, a staff member, came out. After all these years, Melanie is excited to be working with The 519 once again in a different context.



Melanie is the lead family support worker at College Montrose Children's Place EarlyON Child and Family Centre. She has been in this line of work for over 21 years while raising her kids as a single parent and pursuing her passion for art and activism.

The EarlyON centre's commitment to inclusion and Melanie's personal investment in the cause is reflected in their enthusiasm about **Glitterbug**, The 519's LGBTQ2S mobile program that works with EarlyON centres across Toronto to enhance their capacity to offer an affirming environment that celebrates gender and sexual diversity.

"When Glitterbug was announced, we were so keen to get on board."

Melanie proudly showed us her staff name card with her pronouns. It is one of the many recent changes Children's Place has implemented after

training with the Glitterbug team. From talking about pronouns with children and caregivers during circle time to curating books that are gender-expansive, the staff and volunteers at Children's Place are invested in making their programs more inclusive for everyone.

"We have received a great response from parents and caregivers, and we have been having some very engaging and meaningful conversations about what it means to be inclusive."

Melanie believes that such capacity building initiatives should extend to all spaces, especially those serving children. She recognizes that it is not a one-time exercise but an ongoing commitment to unlearn and learn – as our collective understanding and use of language continues to evolve.



The realities of self-love and coping generated by the Coping Together participant group – illustrated by community artist Michelle Campos Castillo

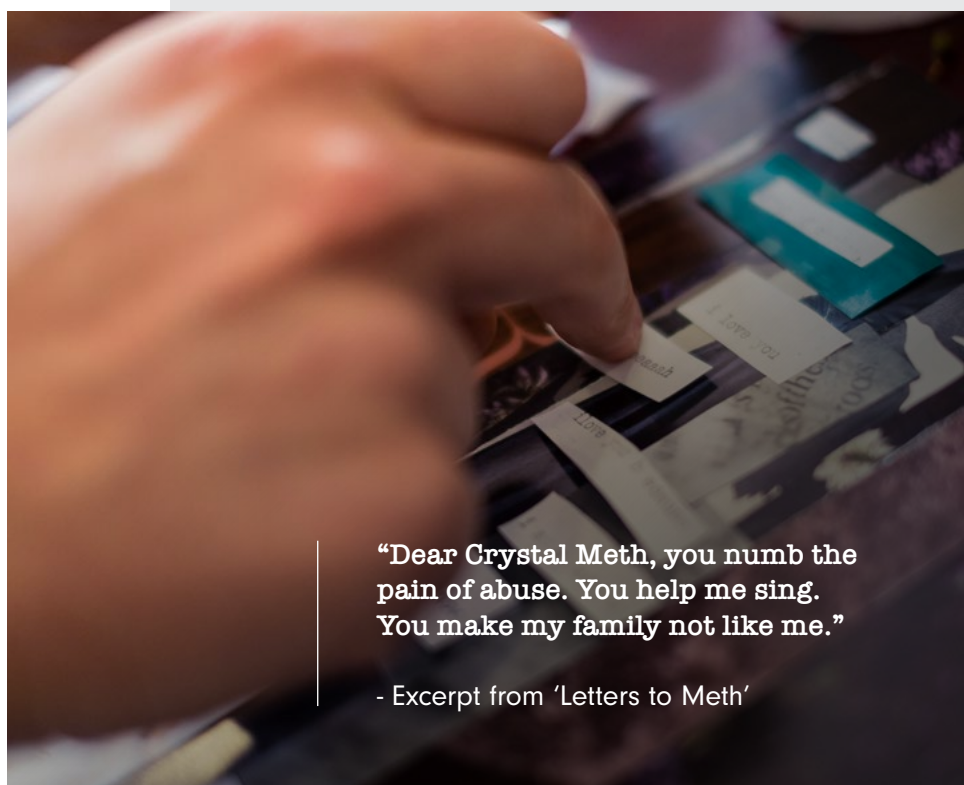
06

Anti-Violence Initiatives

The 519 has been expanding our Anti-Violence Initiatives (AVI) in response to community needs. In addition to securing funding and putting together a dedicated team, we have been focused on developing partnerships, building integrated programming and community resources, and leading advocacy initiatives.

LETTERS TO METH

Part of Breaking the Ice program, 'Letters to Meth' is an artistic project that showcases the tensions, contradictions, triumphs, and struggles of our communities in their relationship to crystal meth. The letters will be utilized as a public engagement and educational tool in order to increase the impact of the project and to work towards reducing the pervasive stigma and shame surrounding methamphetamine use.



"Dear Crystal Meth, you numb the pain of abuse. You help me sing. You make my family not like me."

- Excerpt from 'Letters to Meth'

★ Highlights 2018 / 2019

» **Coping Together**

In 2019, our AVI team in collaboration with our Direct Services team piloted Coping Together – a four-week trauma-informed educational project for LGBTQ refugees and newcomers with experiences of sexual violence, abuse and trauma. The initiative had **16** participants, and the rich learning from this project was shared as a capacity-building initiative with **60** health and social service providers working with LGBTQ newcomers and refugees. Community-informed informational and visual resources were also developed and translated into eight of the most common languages spoken by those who attend our LGBTQ newcomer programs.

» **Breaking The Ice**

In 2018, The 519 chaired a group of health and social service providers and harm reduction leaders in Toronto to respond to the ongoing opioid crisis and, particularly, to the increased use of crystal meth in the communities we serve. One outcome of this group was Breaking the Ice project.

Breaking the Ice is a peer-based information-gathering project funded by the Toronto Urban Health Fund. The project is designed to foster deeper and more responsive solutions to the uptick in use of crystal meth in Toronto's Downtown East. The scope of this ongoing project includes hiring and training of four peer leaders with lived experience, researching with community and health service providers, reviewing best practices, and creating an oral history project called 'Letters to Meth.'

» **Self-Defense Workshops**

We continued to receive a positive response to our community-centric self-defense sessions launched in 2018 in partnership with RCDS Free Women's Self-Defense. In 2018, we offered **9** workshops attended by **125** participants, and from January to August 2019, we offered **5** workshops attended by **58** participants.

» **Incident Response**

- » To support LGBTQ2S community members and respond to hate-fueled demonstrations in the month of Pride, we distributed ready-made, ready-for-pick-up mobilization kits through multiple locations in the Village. Kits were packed with supplies to support peaceful counter-protest and included safety information booklets and banners with affirming messages.
- » **27** staff and community members attended our 'Rights and Considerations While Counter-Protesting' workshop to learn about safe and effective response to targeted hateful demonstrations.
- » We established an AVI group through which information about similar incidents in the Village and relevant resources are shared on an ongoing basis.



Trans Pride March, 2019



07

Youth Engagement and Leadership Programs

» **Trans Youth Mentorship Program (TYMP)**

A continuing program, TYMP enhanced its focus this year on expanding partnerships, building new mentorship opportunities, and establishing relationships with various educational and employment programs for referrals. The current program cycle also maintains a heavy emphasis on developing the skills, networks and pathways to education and employment within the social service sector, based on participants' interests.

» **Queer and Trans Youth Theatre Program**

This new initiative by The 519 and Soulpepper Theatre Company was launched as an intensive eight-week summer program for queer and trans youth to explore theatre techniques in connection with their own personal stories.

» **Chill Skateboard Program**

A partnership with Chill Foundation, this new program followed a positive youth development model designed to build participants' confidence and self-esteem. Through a combination of expert coaching, youth development curriculum, and positive adult mentors, Chill's participants learned to design their own skateboards, and ride, inspire, and lead.



Queer and Trans
Youth Theater
Program, 2019

» **Youth in Power Conference**

The 519 hosted a Downtown East social justice youth conference at Moss Park in partnership with John Innes Community Recreation Centre. It offered a platform to youth to elevate issues affecting them, particularly around the themes of community safety and youth employment. The event brought together a number of youth agencies, youth leaders, and employers.

» **Mic Drop Youth Conference**

Held in early 2019, Mic Drop brought together youth from across Toronto for a day of skill-building and social justice education, largely focused on the repeal of the updated health and physical education curriculum. Developed by youth with support from The 519 staff, the conference was attended by youth, community agencies, elected officials, and leading activists to discuss youth leadership and advocacy on issues important to them.

» **Youth Social Justice Summer Camp**

Building on the Youth in Power and Mic Drop events, this new program engaged 10 high-school-aged youth in an intensive three-week skill-building program focused on community organizing and social justice. Participants gained skills and knowledge that will help them engage in making change in their own communities.



Mic Drop Youth Conference, 2019



Trans Youth Leadership Forum organized by TYMP, 2019



SAY IT LOUD! SAY IT CLEAR



Kyra performing her monologue

“

“I wonder how I’d look if I was bald. Oh well that’s kinda cute, I mean this way you can see way more of my bone structure. My head doesn’t feel that weird; no unusual bumps. Feels pretty symmetrical. Huh, I’d look kinda androgynous. Is that a guy or a girl, who knows? God... I wish I was a man. Oh God, oh no what am I gonna - ugh I can’t tell my family this. Maybe mom one day but dad? Oh no, Grandma and Grandpa, I can’t tell them what would they even say? And I mean I can’t wait to be a mom and pregnant one day... **What am I gonna do? Live as a boy or a girl? Huh, why can’t I be both?**”

- Excerpt from Kyra’s monologue ‘Two-Faced’,
Queer and Trans Youth Theatre Program

TO JUSTICE AND PEACE

Chinie immigrated to Canada with her family less than two years ago and has been keeping busy learning about oppression, social justice, and human rights as part of her own journey of self-discovery.

Chinie came to The 519 for the first time in early 2019 to attend **Mic Drop**, a youth-led conference focused on social justice.


She left inspired and joined the Gay-Straight Alliance in her school. When she found out about The 519's **Youth Social Justice Summer Camp** for high-school aged students, she had no doubts that she wanted to join even if it meant changing all her original plans for the summer. She feels that the camp was everything she had imagined and more.

"My favourite part of the camp was the mock trial at UofT. Before that experience, I always perceived law to be just another lucrative profession. It was the first time I realized the important connection between social justice and the law."

Chinie feels motivated to pursue the path of social justice and integrate what she has learned in the way she views and navigates the world. She plans to continue learning and finding ways to help make the world a better place.

"I have a lot of personal healing to accomplish. But finding community, making new friends, and connecting my own personal struggles to the bigger picture is helping a lot."





08

Education and Training

In line with our strategic priorities, the team focused on working with fewer client organizations on a more consistent and long-term basis to effect sustainable change. The support extended beyond workshops and included consultation for organizational policy reviews, forms reviews, washroom signage, and support for employees transitioning at work.

In 2018/19, our Education and Training team delivered **314** inclusion workshops to **7,661** people in **85** organizations in the corporate, non-profit, government, education, health, and housing sectors.

COMMUNITY VOICES

"As a queer, Asian, non-binary artist, I believe it is important to create an affirming space for people of colour, queer, trans, and two-spirit communities to increase access to dance. When I see a room full of people with a range of different bodies and skin tones dancing and having a moment that is theirs to feel alive, I find it profound and fulfilling."

- Sze-Yang Ade-Lam,
Facilitator, Find Ur Sexy!

Find Ur Sexy!, a community partnership with The 519, is a free series of drop-in heels dance classes for QTBIPOC (Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour).



Sze-Yang Ade-Lam at The 519



Jen with Christopher

"Earlier this year, my husband and I proudly supported our son Christopher when he asserted his identity. As he began opening up, we had no idea what to do other than listen and reinforce our love. I was happy to learn about The 519's Kids Action and Arts Space (KAAS) program. Christopher participated in several weekends of KAAS programming. He also had the opportunity to try using new pronouns in a safe place for the first time."

As a parent, the last six months have been the most mind-expanding period of my life. I have learned so much from Christopher, not only about courage and what it means to stand up for yourself, but also about how to be a more inclusive and respectful person."

- Jen, KAAS participant Christopher's parent

KAAS is a free, bi-monthly drop-in program that offers arts and movement-based activities for two-spirit, queer, trans, and non-binary kids, as well as the kids of queer and trans families.

SPOTLIGHTS



TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE, 2018



COOKING WITH POWER, MOSS PARK

The peer leaders from our Trans People of Colour (TPOC) project offered cooking lessons to youth at the John Innes Community Recreation Centre.



THE BUSTLE OF BEAUTY BY IRIS

This piece was created by Iris – a member of our Trans Day of Remembrance Committee – in memory of our missing and murdered Indigenous sisters and siblings. For Iris, each rhinestone represents the shine and beauty of their lives and each feather represents their wings.



35th AIDS CANDLELIGHT VIGIL, 2019

Photo by 416Kings



LUMINATO FESTIVAL, 2019

We invited community members to contribute to a large blank canvas to explore what their art of resistance looks like, as part of the Luminato Festival, The Art of Resistance.



BACK TO SCHOOL BASH, MOSS PARK, 2018

More than 350 community members attended the third annual Back to School Bash at the John Innes Community Recreation centre. 200 backpacks with back-to-school supplies were distributed.





EXISTENCE IS RESISTANCE

In search of transition support, Diana started attending a community-led trans support group at The 519 a couple of years ago. That was the beginning of her new journey – one that led to the launch of her own community group offering a special blend.



With a smile on her face and a skip in her step, Diana comes to The 519 to lead Gender Blender – her meet-up group that offers trans folks a space to socialize. What originally started as a group shopping trip quickly evolved into an idea of a blended social group.

“I felt that there was a lack of lighthearted interaction for trans communities, and also often a separation of transfeminine, transmasculine and non-binary folks in various trans-focused social groups.”

A great idea rooted in community need and supported by loads of positive energy, Diana’s vision for Gender Blender started to grow. What remained missing was support for sustaining and growing the concept.

Diana not only attended community-led support groups at The 519 but was also part of other programs including **Meal Trans**, **Counselling programs**, and **Legal Clinics**. She decided to pitch her idea to The 519 and was able to acquire ongoing support for Gender Blender, including space, food, and transportation assistance.

“It’s important to find people who really care.”

Now the group takes place every month and Diana curates a wide variety of activities like karaoke, video game tournaments, dancing, board and card games, picnics, museum visits and whatever else she can dream up. She believes that the most difficult part of early transition is social integration, which motivated her to create an additional community space that is unified and supports a safe, inclusive, and encouraging atmosphere for all trans people.

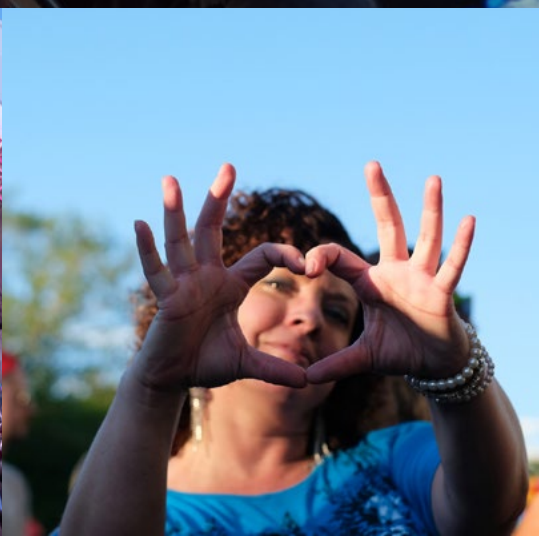
Diana has big plans, a positive attitude, and unyielding motivation to make a difference in her community and we are all rooting for her.

“Creating this group was an important part of my own transition as well.”



ALL UNITE! FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHTS

Philanthropy and Fundraising



THE PARTY OF THE YEAR

The best alfresco parties, queery performances, delicious food and drinks, and a whole lot of love: Green Space Festival, 2019 raised **\$1.5 million**⁸ in support of our year-round programs and services. Thank you for partying with us for a cause.

Photos by Aydin Matlabi



TREEHOUSE PARTY,
GREEN SPACE FESTIVAL
2019



STARRY NIGHT,
GREEN SPACE FESTIVAL
2019



TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH

The time and skills you give as volunteers, the events you attend as our guests, the gifts you share as donors, funders, and partners – every interaction is meaningful for us, and critical to the work we do in our communities.

WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU

Donations and fundraising amounted to **33%** of our total annual revenue in 2018.



DISCO DISCO, GREEN SPACE FESTIVAL 2019

Photo by Aydin Matlabi



Footnote: Total represents gross amount.



OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

1,248 volunteers donated
25,075 hours to The 519 in 2018.

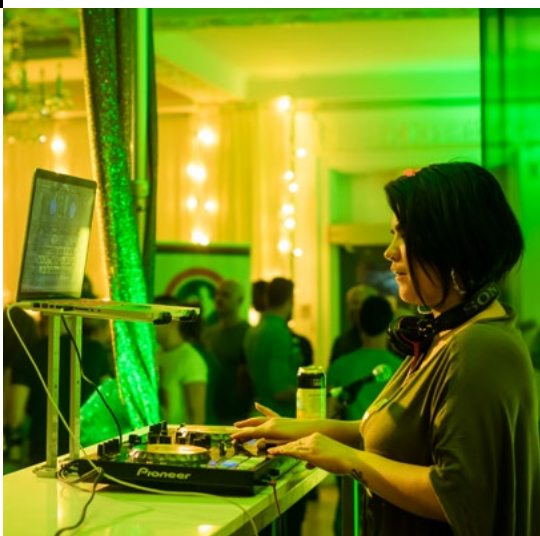
Thank you for your generosity,
time, talent, and commitment.



SALAH BACHIR'S ANNUAL GALA FOR THE 519

Our Annual Gala 2018 brought the Broadway legend Ben Vereen to Toronto as the headliner. The event raised **\$350,000⁸** for our programs and services. Special thanks to our honorary patron and event's host Salah Bachir.

Photo by George Pimentel



THERE IS A FIRE IN OUR HEARTS TONIGHT, FIREFLY PUB 2019

Our queer take on St. Patrick's Day raised **\$16,215⁸** for The 519. Thank you for joining us.

⁸ Gross amount



SHOW YOUR PRIDE AND CELEBRATE

Every year, Chris is incredibly busy during Pride weekend working at Green Space Festival, where she has been a volunteer for 10 years.

Team training is an integral part of Chris's work at a property management company. This is why she feels that being a Team Lead volunteer at **Green Space Festival** is such a good fit for her. During the Festival, you will find Chris leading teams of other volunteers working at the bars or token counters. Her favourite part about the experience is the meaningful conversations and the community connections.

Chris came out more than a decade ago. The social isolation she felt at the time brought her to The 519 to volunteer and find community.

"After I came out, I wanted to meet people, get more involved and give back to the community. I decided to volunteer, because that was the best way for me to get outside of my little bubble and truly live out."

Besides volunteering at Green Space Festival and various other events at The 519, she likes to support our year-round programs and services in various ways, including making personal donations. She has not only engaged her employer to support The 519, but has also rallied her friends and family, including her father and wife, to volunteer.

"There are tons of ways to give back. Whether it is your time, or even a smile that can make someone's day."

**TREEHOUSE PARTY,
GREEN SPACE FESTIVAL 2019**

Photo by Aydin Matlabi



DONOR RECOGNITION

2018

Major Funding Partners



Our heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals, organizations, and community groups who supported our work through their thoughtful donations and involvement, including through our direct appeals and our special events, such as Green Space Festival, Firefly Pub, and the Annual Gala. You have made a difference in the lives of the hundreds of people who come into The 519 every day.

This donor list reflects donations of \$20 or more received from **January 1 to December 31, 2018**. The 519 makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of our donor list. For any inquiries, please email Giving@The519.org.

Corporate, Foundations and Community Partners

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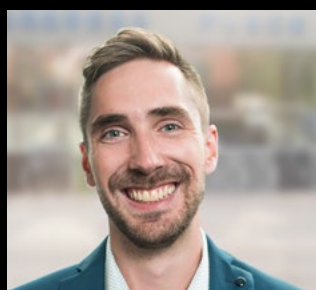
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

REVENUE			2018	2017
Grants	City of Toronto	Core	\$1,478,975	\$1,391,583
		Grants	758,906	341,293
	United Way		279,004	247,844
	Government of Canada		568,009	405,642
	Others		233,754	145,310
	Province of Ontario		217,118	119,527
			3,535,766	2,651,199
Donations			951,972	1,347,901
Fundraising			1,199,070	1,208,796
Café			539,565	589,140
Education & Training			255,822	273,807
Rental fees			52,644	45,984
Other revenue			13,171	10,934
Interest			10,410	5,052
Amortization of deferred capital contributions			20,203	20,203
TOTAL REVENUE			6,578,623	6,153,016
EXPENSES				
Salaries and wages			3,035,516	2,685,782
Employee benefits			772,742	701,728
Purchase of services			1,538,930	1,567,096
Materials, supplies and services			1,102,368	1,019,778
Amortization of capital assets			53,761	58,010
TOTAL EXPENSES			6,503,317	6,032,394
NET REVENUE			\$75,306	\$120,622

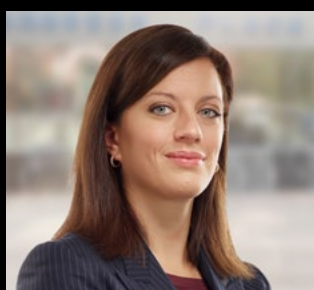
*The surplus from our operating activities (excluding grant funding and other defined contributions) is set aside in a programs reserve fund for future program requirements or emergency needs.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

2018 / 2019



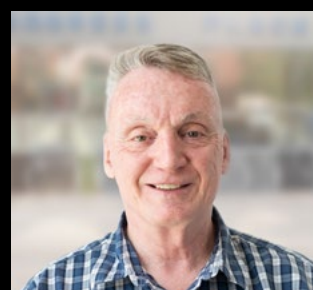
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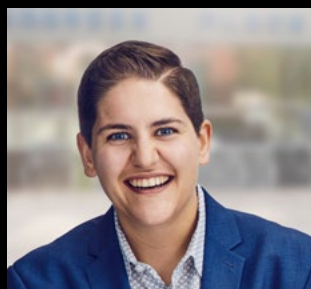
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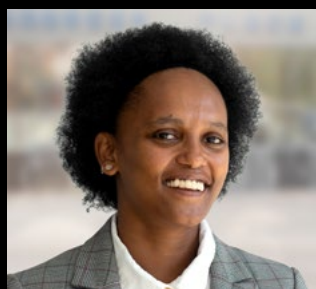
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The 519 is committed to the health, happiness and full participation of the LGBTQ2S communities in Toronto and beyond.

We would love it if you join us in this work.

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