

Trans Connect

Annual Report

April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020



Image: A “puppy therapy” visit to the *Under the Umbrella* youth group in Nelson, BC.

Taken September 21, 2019.

WORKSHOPS

In the last year, Trans Connect has presented **80 workshops** on trans identity and LGBTQ allyship to **16 communities**. In total, these workshops have been attended by about **1500 individuals** in the past year! This has been a huge increase since last year, which I attribute to increases in outreach, notoriety, and facilitation skills on my part as a program coordinator. 🍷

GROUPS

Gender Outlaws

I’ve been hosting **monthly all-ages support groups** in Nelson, Cranbrook, and Trail with a focus on food, community connection, trans identity, mental health, and social justice. The Trail group debuted on October 30, 2019 and has been a huge success in connecting with and impacting the local community!

Under the Umbrella

A **weekly LGBTQ+ youth group** in Nelson (partnered with NYAN and the NDYC). This group has a focus on social activities like role-playing games, movie nights, and art.

GSA Support

Regular outreach to LGBTQ+ youth and allies through **lunchtime groups** at LV Rogers and Mt Sentinel, with occasional visits to schools in Cranbrook and Trail.

FOCUS GROUPS

There were three **special consultation events** hosted over the past year: two were partnered with Health Equity Collaborative for the Ministry of Health on rural trans health access and experiences, hosted in Nelson and Cranbrook. One was a partnership with Ambit Gender Diversity Consulting for the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to take a look at experiences of poverty in the transgender community in Nelson. Focus group reports are attached later on.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

Over the past year, I've provided peer support to around **50 individuals** on coming out, emotional health, transgender healthcare navigation, supporting trans loved ones, or connecting to community. A few have requested more involved casework supporting them through processes like human rights tribunal cases or overcoming gender dysphoria.

RAINBOW CLINIC

There were **four Rainbow Clinic events for the LGBTQ+ community** with a focus on transgender care and sexual/reproductive health, between April and October, 2019. The clinic has been on hiatus since October, since the NP sponsoring the clinic stated she was not being reimbursed properly for her billed hours through her funding body, and was prioritizing other local clinics with her hours.

There are connections in place to bring the Rainbow Clinic back in operation through connections to a local GP. Talks on this will resume after the COVID-19 shutdowns are less impactful on her work.

CHRISTOPHER MOORE COMMUNITY FUND

All proceeds (like honoraria and donations) Trans Connect collects from educational workshops and community connections have traditionally been put into a fund of money for community members who need

access to emergency or one-time funds for things like health-related transportation or gender-affirming garments like binders or breastforms. This fund has been officially named the *Christopher Moore Community Fund* to honor the founding coordinator of the Trans Connect program - a reception was hosted during the March *Gender Outlaws* meeting in Nelson, and has been well-accessed by community members across the region.

ALL BODIES SWIM & GYM

There were **four swim events and four gym events** hosted for the trans community in Nelson from June to August, 2019. While the June, July, and August events drew a small crowd, there was feedback from some participants that they found the workout instructor "intense" and the swims "a bit public". This feedback is going to be taken into consideration for whenever this program may reboot (in a gentler, more private setting).

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Our **annual November 20 vigil** for transgender people who had been murdered across the world was hosted in Nelson again this year. Around 20 people attended the outdoor event on a public street corner, which included the lighting of candles, saying of names, and sharing of experiences.

PRACTICUM STUDENTS

I've supervised **two UVIC Social Work students** in the past year, and assisted in the supervision of a Selkirk Social Work student. These students have provided some additional programming, each hosting an *Allyship Reading Circle* events series for community members wanting to read and share about their personal allyship journeys.

CONSULTING + COLLABS

Organizations have reached out for policy consultation around transgender inclusion, and others have asked for collaborative support in their endeavors, including a social worker from BC Children's hospital, Castelgar Community Living, Selkirk College Healthy Campus, Kimberley Mental Health, and Nelson CARES.

Trans Connect also has ongoing collaborations with the Skills Centre in Trail (where *Gender Outlaws* is hosted), NDYC in Nelson (where *Under the Umbrella* is hosted) and FreedomQuest (for GSA supports in schools). Milo, the Trans Connect coordinator, has also been sitting on the board of Options for Sexual Health over the past six months to increase transgender competency in the province's sexual health resources.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

On March 12, the program's coordinator was encouraged to self-isolate due to illness and their partner's recent visit to the USA.

Beginning March 25, all Trans Connect **programming moved online** with weekly *Gender Outlaws* over Zoom, Discord, and Facebook; weekly *Under the Umbrella* over Jitsi and Discord; peer support happening over social media, video chat, and phone; and online workshops hosted over Zoom and similar platforms.

ADDITIONAL REPORTS + LINKS

- [Trans Connect's 6 month report for IHA: April 1 - September 30, 2019](#)
- [Trans Connect's 6 month report for IHA: October 1 - March 31, 2020](#)
- [Health Equity Collaborative reports on Cranbrook and Nelson transgender community health consultations](#)
- [Poverty Reduction in Trans, Non-binary, and Two Spirit Communities](#) (Outcome of the poverty consultation collaboration)
- [Trans Connect program website](#)
- [Trans Connect's Facebook page](#)
- [Trans Connect's Instagram](#)



Image: Penpal letters written to and from program participants since COVID-19 distance services have begun.