



***2008 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT:
COMMUNITY – A WORK IN PROGRESS***

Mission Statement:

We seek to foster change in our communities and our society at large so that people of all sexual orientations and gender identities are valued and included. We will achieve this through community development, networking, outreach, education, and political action.

NSRAP is open to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities who are supportive of our mission and objectives.



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Working together to build a strong Rainbow Community...

The theme of our 2007 annual Gala – Community: A Work in Progress – set the tone for the activities of the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project (NSRAP) throughout 2007-2008.

The Society's priorities focused on bridging the various segments of the Rainbow Community in Nova Scotia. NSRAP's participation in activities such as the Halifax town hall meeting, the Truro town hall meeting and May 17th events highlights the importance of nourishing dialogue and collaboration between the various segments of our community. By coming together as one united community, we can attain our common goal: building a strong, flourishing Rainbow Community in Nova Scotia. There is still work to be done, but the momentum built up by our collective efforts over the past year ensures that this remains "a work in progress".

NSRAP relies almost exclusively on volunteers to achieve its mission. Thank you to the members of the Board of Directors and to the numerous volunteers for their commitment to the Society's mission. It has been a pleasure to serve as Chair of the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project and to work with individuals whose love and devotion for their community guide their efforts.

Yours in Pride,

Kevin Kindred, Chair
Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee:

Kevin Kindred – Chair
Sean Foreman – Past Chair and Treasurer
Elaine Craig – Vice Chair
Catherine Meade – Executive Member-at-Large
Gaston Saulnier – Secretary

Directors:

Hugo Dann
Charles Hsuen
Ann Levangie
Jenn Nearing
Matthew Numer

STAFF

Charles Hsuen – Coordinator (December 2006 to December 2007)



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2007-2008 PRIORITIES

The following priorities were identified during the 2007 Annual General Meeting (June 16, 2007) of the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project (NSRAP):

Priority 1 – NSRAP Membership

- Increase the NSRAP membership list

Priority 2 – NSRAP Brand

- Redesign the website, pamphlets, etc.

Priority 3 – Public and Media Relations

- Produce quarterly reports / newsletters
- Raise NSRAP's profile within the community at large and within the Rainbow Community

Priority 4 – Community Outreach

- Create and sustain partnerships
- Increase networking efforts within and outside the Rainbow Community
- Maintain and further develop NSRAP's relationship with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission
- Continue efforts to establish a Rainbow community centre
- Engage in advocacy on behalf of the Rainbow Community
- Establish a Rainbow Coalition
- Organise a Town Hall Meeting
- Participate in Pride celebrations

Through outreach efforts, the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project continues to learn what advocacy looks like in Rainbow communities across Nova Scotia.



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SUMMARY OF 2007-2008 ACHIEVEMENTS

Priority 2 – NSRAP Brand

- Redesign the website, pamphlets, etc.
 - a- Gala – Community: A Work In Progress, NSRAP's fourth annual gala and the organisation's signature event (September 2007)
 - b- Work on NSRAP website redesign (ongoing)

Priority 3 – Public and Media Relations

- Raise NSRAP's profile within the community at large and within the Rainbow Community
 - a- Articles in *Wayves* - Seven articles published between July 2007 and July 2008
 - b- Reactions to advertisements for Pastor Perry Rockwood's "People's Gospel Hour" mission that condemned homosexuality published in *The Chronicle Herald* and the *Daily News* (Fall 2007)
 - c- Radio-Canada (radio and television – Atlantic network) – Comments on Health Canada's discriminatory organ donor policy (Winter 2008)
 - d- *The Chronicle Herald* – Comments on Health Canada's discriminatory organ donor policy (Winter 2008)

Priority 4 – Community Outreach

- Create and sustain partnerships / Increase networking efforts within and outside the Rainbow Community
 - a- Halifax Regional Police Chief's Diversity Committee
 - b- Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Project
 - c- Northern AIDS Connection Society (NACS)
 - d- Nova Scotia Rainbow Pride Community Centre Society
 - e- Pride Halifax
 - f- Pride Health – Capital Health District Authority
 - g- Pride of Pictou County
 - h- Truro Pride
 - i- *Wayves*
- Maintain and further develop NSRAP's relationship with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission
 - a- Equal rights for same-sex parents – human rights complaint (Fall 2007)
- Continue efforts to establish a Rainbow community centre
 - a- Feasibility study / Halifax Regional Municipality Community Grant – Town Hall Meeting (November 2007)
- Engage in advocacy on behalf of the Rainbow Community
 - a- Human rights complaint for equal rights for same-sex parents (Fall 2007)
 - b- Pride of Pictou County – political lobbying of municipal and town councils to ensure that Pride groups throughout Nova Scotia have the opportunity to fly the Pride flag during Pride celebrations and have equal recognition from municipal and town officials (Spring 2008)
 - c- Recognition of International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia by the Halifax Regional Municipality (May 2008)
 - d- Recognition of International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia by the Province of Nova Scotia (May 2008)



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SUMMARY OF 2007-2008 ACHIEVEMENTS

Priority 4 – Community Outreach (Continued)

- Establish a Rainbow Coalition
 - a- Participation at numerous meetings of Rainbow Community leaders (ongoing)
- Organise a Town Hall Meeting
 - a- Participation in the Town Hall on Religious Freedoms and Equality Rights in Truro (September 2007)
 - b- Co-organisation of the Halifax town hall meeting (November 2007)
- Participate in Pride celebrations
 - a- Halifax 2007 Pride - Lecture series and financial contribution (Summer 2007)
 - b- May 17th events in Halifax – Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Project GSA public announcement at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (Words by the Chair of NSRAP)
 - c- May 17th events in Pictou County (Words by the Chair of NSRAP)

I was really impressed by the level of discussion during the Town Hall on Religious Freedoms and Equality Rights held in Truro. I can't think of another event I've been to where people came together, not necessarily to agree on a controversial issue, but to sincerely learn and listen to each other. I hope that it's something that we can make happen in other communities.

**Kevin Kindred,
Chair of the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project**

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR SAME-SEX PARENTS

In August 2007, the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project (NSRAP) supported Jamie and Emily O'Neill in their fight for equality in being recognized as their daughter's legal parents under the *Vital Statistics Act* of Nova Scotia.

Pursuant to the former regulations of the *Vital Statistics Act*, when a married, opposite sex couple had a baby, the husband automatically got registered as the "father" on the child's birth certificate, even in the case of artificial insemination. Except adoption, there was no equivalent right in the legislation if the couple was of the same sex. Being named the parent on a child's birth certificate gives that person real rights in regard to the child's future and is a legal and social statement recognizing the validity of the family unit.

NSRAP argued that same-sex couples deserve equal treatment under the Act, considering that same-sex marriage was legalised in 2004 and that similar legislation was found to be discriminatory in three other provinces. On behalf of the O'Neills, NSRAP wrote to the minister responsible for the *Vital Statistics Act*. The organisation then supported the couple in a human rights complaint against the Government of Nova Scotia.

Thanks to increased scrutiny and political pressure, the Government of Nova Scotia found what NSRAP maintains to be a partial solution. Where couples conceive using an anonymous donor, they now have the right to be recognized as the legal parents without having to adopt. It does not matter whether the couple is married or not. There is a process for unmarried couples as well. However, there remains inconsistency within the new regulations.

Under the new regulations, the couple must conceive using an anonymous donor. If the donor is known, then the old rules still apply. While anonymous-donor inseminations are a preferred method for many same-sex couples, other parents prefer to know their donor.

Alignment with 2007-2008 Priorities:

Priority 3 – Public and Media Relations: The media attention regarding the human rights complaint promoted greater awareness of the rights of same-sex parents. The media comments further highlighted NSRAP's capacity to engage in advocacy on behalf of the Rainbow Community.

Priority 4 – Community Outreach: Engaging in legal and political advocacy such as the O'Neill case remains one of the key strengths of NSRAP.



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2007 GALA

The Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project hosted its fourth annual gala dinner on Saturday, September 15, 2007 at the Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel.

The Gala is NSRAP's largest annual fundraiser. The funds raised during the event help finance the organisation's activities throughout the year. Thanks to the generosity of guests, this year's event raised more than 5 900 dollars (net revenue) through ticket sales and the auction. Our thanks are also extended to Safe Harbour Metropolitan Community Church for organising the auction.

Host Candy Palmeter had attendees laughing throughout the evening while keynote speaker Samantha Loppie provided food for thought about the diversity within the Rainbow Community.

The evening's theme – Community: A Work in Progress – nourished efforts to bridge the various segments within the Rainbow Community and build a strong, flourishing Rainbow Community in Nova Scotia.

Alignment with the 2007-2008 Priorities:

Priority 2: Strengthen the NSRAP Brand: The annual Gala has become NSRAP's signature event and an anticipated social event.

Priority 3 – Public and Media Relations: The Gala helped raise the NSRAP's profile within the Rainbow Community.

Priority 4 – Community Outreach: The annual gala dinner provided a forum for networking, exchanging success stories as well as strengthening community partnerships.

TRURO TOWN HALL MEETING

On September 22, 2007, Truro Pride and the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project co-organised a "Town Hall on Religious Freedoms and Equality Rights". Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) community, representatives of religious groups, town officials, and interested citizens of Truro and surrounding areas gathered to discuss the potential conflicts between religious rights and equality rights. The event was organised in response to the decision by the Town of Truro not to fly the Pride Flag. About 50 people attended.

The panellists included Elaine Craig, a Law Professor at Dalhousie University (Halifax) and Vice Chair of NSRAP, Nancy Erhard, Professor of Comparative Religious Ethics at Saint Mary's University (Halifax), Reverend Eldon Hay, a United Church Minister and long-time LGBT rights activist. Kevin Kindred, Chair of NSRAP, served as moderator.

Alignment with 2007-2008 Priorities:

Priority 4 – Community Outreach: The Truro town hall strengthened NSRAP's relationship and presence in communities outside the Halifax Regional Municipality.



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HALIFAX TOWN HALL MEETING / RAINBOW COMMUNITY CENTRE FEASIBILITY STUDY

In partnership with the Nova Scotia Rainbow Pride Community Centre Society, Pride Halifax, the Pride Health initiative at Capital Health District Authority, and *Wayves*, the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project co-organised a town hall meeting in Halifax in November 2007.

The event served as a forum for discussion on three subjects of importance to the development of the Rainbow Community:

- Establishment of a Rainbow community centre;
- Access and delivery of health care services to the Rainbow Community;
- Improvement of Atlantic Canada's Pride magazine, *Wayves*.

The town hall meeting was held at the Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel.

Alignment with 2007-2008 Priorities:

Priority 3 – Public and Media Relations: The event increased NSRAP's presence in the Rainbow Community.

Priority 4 – Community Outreach: By co-organising the town hall, NSRAP strengthened its partnerships with leading organisations in the Rainbow Community. The event also provided an ideal forum for Rainbow Community members to discuss the feasibility of a Rainbow community centre and to contribute towards the development of their community.

ORGAN DONOR POLICY – HEALTH CANADA

During the 2007 winter months, The Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project was asked to comment on Health Canada's change of screening policy for organ donations that exclude men who have had sexual intercourse with men in the last five years. The organisation's reactions were captured in *The Chronicle Herald* and on Radio-Canada, both the French radio and television Atlantic network.

NSRAP's response was consistent with Egale's: The new policy is discriminatory, an opinion also generally shared by medical authorities. Conscious of the risk of HIV / AIDS, the Rainbow Community is invested in protecting the supply of donor organs and tissues. However, NSRAP maintains that the organ donor policy should be based on the individual conduct of the donor, not on sexual orientation or stereotypes of a particular community's behaviour. The organ donor policy should be designed to reduce the risks that unsafe practices of members of all segments of the general population place on the supply of donor organs.

Alignment with 2007-2008 Priorities:

Priority 3 – Public and Media Relations: NSRAP's comments increased awareness of policies and regulations important for the health of Rainbow Community members.



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PRIDE OF PICTOU COUNTY

The Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project supported the Northern AIDS Connection Society (NACS) in lobbying councillors of the Municipality of Pictou County to vote against a motion restricting the type of flags permitted on the flagpoles of the municipal building.

In response to Pictou County's decision to limit the flags it will fly on the county flag poll to government flags – essentially denying Pride of Pictou County from flying the Pride flag – NSRAP, in partnership with local Pride groups, will continue lobbying municipal and town councils to ensure that Pride groups throughout Nova Scotia have the opportunity to fly the Pride flag during Pride celebrations and have equal recognition from municipal and town officials

Alignment with 2007-2008 Priorities:

Priority 4 – Community Outreach: NSRAP's lobby efforts will provide an opportunity to create new partnerships with Pride groups throughout Nova Scotia and increase networking opportunities within and outside the Rainbow community.

OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSOPHOBIA – MAY 17TH

In 2008, the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Province of Nova Scotia officially recognised May 17th as International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

In approaching the Municipality and the Province for official proclamations, NSRAP maintained that the focus of May 17th should include transphobia.

The Chair of NSRAP spoke during the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Project GSA public service announcement on homophobia held at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and during the event held in Pictou.

Alignment with 2007-2008 Priorities:

Priority 4 – Community Outreach: By participating in various Pride celebrations and manifestations such as those organised in Pictou, NSRAP increased its presence and outreach efforts in communities throughout Nova Scotia.

Mark your calendar!
2008 Gala

Saturday, October 4, 2008
Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel
Keynote speaker: James Loney

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TRANS COMMITTEE

In early spring 2007, The Trans Committee monitored two major news stories regarding trans issues: the transsexual health policy proposed by the Nova Scotia Young Liberals and the appointment of Kenneth Zucker to chair the revisions on sexuality and gender in the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V)*.

The Nova Scotia Young Liberals met in February 2008. Among the many resolutions they drafted to be put forward at a later full party meeting was a transsexual health policy. Although the resolution to cover sexual reassignment surgery (SRS) was resolution number 11, it was the resolution on which *The Chronicle Herald* focused when reporting on the Young Liberal's meeting and the full party meeting.

The Trans Committee believes that *The Chronicle Herald's* article was a misinformed depiction of Transsexuality and typical of the media's approach to trans issues. The article also generated many reader responses focused on the potential impact of SRS on the health care system and responses that questioned the need for SRS.

A second news story monitored by the Trans Committee is the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) appointment of Kenneth Zucker, a psychologist with controversial views on trans health, to chair the revisions on sexuality and gender in the DSM-V, the manual of mental health disorders. The Trans Committee will continue to monitor Zucker's appointment and its impact on the Trans Community of Nova Scotia.

Alignment with 2007-2008 Priorities:

Priority 3 – Public and Media Relations: NSRAP continues its efforts to educate the general population and the Rainbow Community regarding trans issues.

Priority 4 – Community Outreach: The Trans Committee's efforts to increase awareness of trans issues will be more efficient by creating partnerships with key community leaders and organisations.

BOARD AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2007-2008, The Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project welcomed three new members on its Board of Directors: Charles Hsuen, Catherine Meade, and Matthew Numer. Four individuals left the Board: Bob Fougere, Eric MacDonald, Laurie Stephenson, and Darlene Young. NSRAP thanks them for their dedication to the organisation's mission and for their contribution towards the growth of the Rainbow Community of Nova Scotia.

Between December 2006 and December 2007, Charles Hsuen served as the NSRAP Coordinator. In addition to handling the day-to-day activities of NSRAP, Hsuen played a key role in organising the 2007 Gala.

The Board of Directors worked throughout the year to formalise its committee structure to increase participation of non-Board members, much like the 2008-2009 Gala Planning Committee. Inviting non-Board members to get involved in the activities of the organisation infuses new ideas and energy into NSRAP. The committee structure also serves as a tool to recruit new Board members. Accordingly, the Board of Directors began developing a committee reporting structure for the standing and ad hoc committees of NSRAP.

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NSRAP continued its efforts to establish a charitable foundation for the Rainbow Community. A pro-bono file was opened at the law firm Wickwire Holm to complete the set up of the foundation.

Work to redesign the NSRAP website was ongoing throughout the year.

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2008 NSRAP Annual Activity Report respectfully submitted by:
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NSRAP Secretary
July 5, 2008

