



2009 Annual Activity Report

Celebrating our Community Heroes

The NOVA SCOTIA RAINBOW ACTION PROJECT...

... seeks 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.

Message from the Chair

Celebrating the hero in each and everyone one of us...

When we speak of the Rainbow Community, we speak of just that: a community in which the LGBT folk, rich in their diversity but united in their pride, are the most important assets.

Within our community, there are certain people that stand out in the way they articulate their vision of a vibrant, flourishing Rainbow Community; in the way they motivate us to challenge the status quo; and in the way they inspire us to work together for change within our community. These individuals are our community heroes. They are the 75 brave individuals who, more than twenty years ago, marched down Spring Garden Road and into history as the first Pride Parade in Halifax. Our heroes are those that use our community's history as building blocks to construct our future and a more defined queer culture. They are those who, in good times and in bad times, rally behind us in our efforts to build a stronger Rainbow Community. But, there is also a hero in each and everyone one of us when we stand proud of who we are; when we speak out against homophobia and transphobia in our daily activities; and when we contribute, in our individual way, to improving our community. (...)

Heroes challenge the status quo...

“Students and teachers are in the trenches and see homophobia in the schools every day. But this province is full of courageous students who are fighting back, and are talking about homophobia as part of the broader issue of bullying.”

Kevin Kindred
Chair – Nova Scotia
Rainbow Action Project

A hero reaches out to those in need...

“Reverend Darlene Young has had a direct and personal impact on so many members of our community, during good times and bad. To me, she's the true embodiment of a community hero and NSRAP wishes to present an annual community hero award in her memory.”

Kevin Kindred
Chair – Nova Scotia
Rainbow Action Project



Message from the Chair (continued)

The Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project (NSRAP) recognizes the importance of honoring our community heroes. During its fifth annual Gala in October 2008, NSRAP launched the Reverend Darlene Young Community Hero Award. Each year, the award will honor a Nova Scotian who has made a substantial contribution(s) to the progress of LGBT issues in our province.

Following the examples set by our community heroes, NSRAP has worked to address a wide range of political, social, and legal issues within our community throughout the past year. I invite you to read about NSRAP's achievements as highlighted in this annual activity report.

As Chair of NSRAP, I have had the pleasure of working with many heroes during the past three years. I thank my fellow Board members and the leaders within the Rainbow Community for their perseverance and inspiration. I am grateful for the time and energy you dedicate, many of you on a volunteer basis, 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.

Yours in Pride,

Kevin Kindred, Chair
Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project
July 2009

"We have the legacy, the knowledge, the skills, the tools to rally together as a community and fight for something that we believe in."

Benjie Nycum

Co-founder of Young Gay America and
the associated YGA Magazine

(The Coast – July 2008)

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Kevin Kindred, Chair

Sean Foreman, Past Chair and Treasurer

Elaine Craig, Vice Chair

Catherine Meade, Member-at-Large – Executive Committee

Gaston Saulnier, Secretary

Directors:

Hugo Dann

Julien Davis

Ann Levangie

Jennifer Nearing

Matthew Numer

Community Partners

DalOut

Halifax Pride

Halifax Regional Police Chief's
Diversity Committee

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Project

Menz Bar

PrideHealth

Wayves

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Providing a Voice for the Rainbow Community

The Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project (NSRAP) has been working since 1995 across Nova Scotia as a voice for the Rainbow Community. In 2008-2009, NSRAP:

- Gave a diversity presentation on LGBT issues to a class of cadets of the Halifax Regional Police (Fall 2008).
- Presented a lecture on human rights commissions and hate speech – *Thought Crime or Hate Speech? The Human Rights Commissions Debate* – to the Human Rights Commission of Nova Scotia and during a debate organized by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Public Affairs (Fall 2008).
- Participated on a panel discussion on *Tools for Achieving Diversity in the Classroom* during a national conference on diversity in education organized by the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union (April 2009).
- Conducted a workshop on *Reconciling Religion with LGBT Equality in the Classroom* during a national conference on diversity in education (Nova Scotia Teachers' Union - April 2009).
- Provided advice to teachers, including Alberta teachers, on the issue of notifying parents when diversity is to be discussed in the classroom (April 2009).
- Appeared on a panel on *Current Issues in Human Rights Law* during the 25th annual Conference of the Council of Canadian Administrative Tribunals (May 2009).

"We [members of the Rainbow Community] have every right to be visible, whether it be marching through downtown Halifax, or flying the Rainbow Flag in rural Nova Scotia. We have every right to be proud! We're here, we're queer! We're fabulous!"

Halifax Pride – 2008
(2008 Pride Events Guide)

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Exploring the More Complex Issues Within our Community

During the 2008 Pride week celebrations, NSRAP presented four lectures on the more complex issues within the Rainbow Community, including:

- *A Builder's Guide to the Queer Community* – Matthew Numer
Provided a historical analysis of the evolution of the queer community, explored the current state of affairs, and provided considerations for future directions.
- *Homophobia and Sport* – Catherine Meade
Identified challenges faced by LGBT athletes and suggested means to ensure that all may compete in a safe and welcoming environment.
- *Gender: Trans or Otherwise* – Jenn Nearing
Explored the concepts of gender and sex.
- *Thought Crime or Hate Speech? The Human Rights Commissions Debate* – Kevin Kindred
Explored notions of thought crime, hate speech, freedom of speech, and the role of human rights commissions.

A hero envisions...

"I hope that we will somehow consolidate a notion of queer culture that is built on our history, in the same way that people celebrate all kinds of other cultures. I'm thinking that 15 years from now we will be moving in the direction of having a more or less defined culture."

Daniel MacKay
Publisher – *Wayves*
(*The Coast* – July 2008)

"One of the blessings and the curses of activism is that the mandate is to fight to change something for the better, and the obsolescence of that battle is actually the goal."

Benjie Nycum
Co-founder of Young Gay America and
the associated YGA Magazine
(*The Coast* – July 2008)



Working with Community Partners to Build a Strong Rainbow Community

NSRAP worked with its community partners on initiatives designed to strengthen our community. In 2008-2009, NSRAP:

- Collaborated with the Halifax Regional Police Chief's Diversity Committee to maintain a positive relationship with the regional police (throughout 2008-2009).
- Recommended standard operating policies for police interactions with transgender members of the community to the Halifax Regional Police (April 2009).
- Participated in discussions led by PrideHealth (Capital District Health Authority) to create a strategy to recommend to the Department of Health of Nova Scotia that sex-reassignment surgery be listed as an insurable Medical Services Insurance (MSI) service (April 2009).
- Supported community events such as Camp Out! to celebrate and explore LGBT activism, past and present, in the Maritime Provinces (July 2009).

"Today Pride is first and foremost a celebration of the vibrant and diverse community of LGBT Canadians, freely expressing the hard-fought rights to be valued equally for their identity in Canadian society."

Alexa McDonough
Former Member of Parliament –
Halifax
(2008 Pride Events Guide)

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Mobilizing the Community to Fight for Change

To honor the International Day Against Homophobia (May 17), NSRAP:

- Obtained official recognition of International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia from the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia (May 2008).
- Organized the Rally *for Change: Break Down the Borders of Homophobia!* in Grand Parade Square (Halifax, Nova Scotia). Over 150 people gathered to remember those who paid the ultimate price of homophobia and transphobia and to advocate to change of the ban on blood, organ, and tissue donations from men who have sex with men (May 2009).
- Coordinated, with community stakeholders, a lobbying strategy for funding of sex-reassignment surgery (ongoing).

“Be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize May 17th as the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia and commend the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project and other community groups for their hard work to eliminate homophobia and transphobia.”

RESOLUTION NO. 2630
House of Assembly of Nova Scotia
May 12, 2008

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Recognizing our Community Heroes

During its fifth annual Gala in October 2008, NSRAP launched the Reverend Darlene Young Community Hero Award to honor a Nova Scotian who has made a substantial contribution(s) to the progress of LGBT issues in Nova Scotia. The Award will be presented annually in memory of the late Reverend Darlene Young, a pillar of the Rainbow Community of Nova Scotia and a long-time, dedicated LGBT activist.

The first award recipient is *Wayves* publisher Daniel MacKay. MacKay coordinates the *Rainbow Encyclopedia* and wiki. He has also served on the Pride Board and launched Punoqun, a queer literary supplement to *Wayves*.

Keynote speaker James Loney spoke to the homophobia he experienced when, as a gay Christian Peacekeeper, he was abducted and held captive for four months in Iraq in 2005.

A hero invites us to reflect....

“I think that such awards like NSRAP’s Community Heroes give us an opportunity to examine what’s important, both to ourselves and others, and I think they’re useful tools to help us think about what’s important.”

Daniel MacKay

Publisher - *Wayves*
(*Wayves* – November 2008)

“Daniel MacKay has shown a deep commitment to building our community, keeping us in communication with each other, reminding us of our history and planning our future.”

Kevin Kindred

Chair – Nova Scotia
Rainbow Action Project

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