



From Conversation to Action: Building Community Connections

WRRC Community Dialogue

January 17th, 2012

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Crystal Ballroom, Walper Terrace Hotel



Agenda

- Dreaming Big
Icebreaker Activity 7:05 PM
- Setting the Foundation
Brief Presentation 7:20 PM
- Building the Dream
Small Group Discussion 7:30 PM
- Building the Dream
Large Group Discussion 8:20 PM
- Communicating the Dream
Large Group Discussion 8:40 PM
- Closing 8:55 PM
- Networking Social 9:00 PM



Welcome!

While waiting for us to begin,
complete the following activity!

- On the coloured sheet of paper you received when you entered the room, describe a “dream” that you have for the local rainbow community. For example:
 - Is there a big change you would like to see?
 - Is there a resource you would like to see developed?
 - Is there an event you would like to attend?
 - Feel free to share any dream – big or small!
- Be sure to record something that can be shared with other participants (but don't worry – any sharing will be done anonymously 😊)
- Add your dream to the hat at the front of the room.



Dreaming Big - Icebreaker

- The hat will be passed around the room.
- Draw a piece of paper from the hat.
- Introduce yourself to the group (name only is fine 😊) and share the dream recorded on your piece of paper with the rest of the group.
- We will record the dreams shared in the PowerPoint presentation.



Rainbow Community Dreams

- Community Centre
 - Central location for library, resources and meeting centre
 - Gathering place in uptown Waterloo
 - Like the 519 Community Centre in Toronto
 - Welcoming meeting place
- Community not feeling defective
- Community free of hate
- Community that values diversity
- Community working together
- Feeling safe in community
- Kindness
- More event for us
- More youth involvement
- Next generation has a community without prejudice
- In future being part of whole community
- Representation at all levels of government
- Safe community
- Safe school system
- United Community
 - More inclusive community
 - Strong and unified rainbow community



Setting the Foundation

- What is the Waterloo Region Rainbow Coalition?
 - Founded in Fall 2010 with the specific purpose of hosting 3 Community Conversations to encourage dialogue amongst the rainbow community.
 - Identified need to develop a framework to support sustainable development of the local rainbow community.
 - WRRC has been meeting approximately bi-weekly since January 2011 to “set the foundation” for sustainable rainbow community development.



Setting the Foundation

- Definition of “Rainbow Community”
 - Those interested in increasing awareness and inclusivity of gender and sexual diversity, including those who identify as:
 - lesbian
 - bisexual
 - transsexual
 - Intersex
 - questioning
 - unlabeled
 - straight allies
 - gay
 - transgender,
 - two-spirit
 - queer
 - fluid
 - asexual



Setting the Foundation

- **Vision**

- Working together to build a diverse Rainbow Community voice in Waterloo Region.

- **Mission**

- WRRC is a volunteer-based community organization that is committed to building a unified voice for gender and sexual diversity for people of all ages in Waterloo Region. We promote sustainable opportunities for advocacy, awareness, education and community-building that are respectful of the diverse interests within the Rainbow community. We work together with local allies to foster a strong and inclusive community.



Setting the Foundation

- **Sustainable Approach**

- A number of excellent local initiatives have benefitted the Rainbow Community in the past.
 - Unfortunately, many initiatives have been discontinued or become outdated when volunteers were unable to maintain the resource.
- WRRC ensures that its activities are sustainable or *“able to be maintained or kept going, as an action or process”* (www.dictionary.com)
- Can sometimes mean things are a little slower getting started, but will hopefully last longer.



Setting the Foundation

Just a few of the community connections and partnerships we have been building over the past year ...

- ACCKWA
- Cityhood Centennial Community Group
- Grand River Rainbow Historical Project
- Proud Magazine
- Social Innovation Research Group (SIRG)
- Waterloo Public Interest Research Group (WPIRG)
- Waterloo Regional Police Services
- City of Kitchener
- EGALE
- Hate Crimes Advisory Committee
- Sizzle
- Tri-Pride
- Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council
- Wednesday Night Discussion Group (www.wndg.ca)



Setting the Foundation

- Some of the projects we have been working on:
 - WPIRG Action Group
 - Rainbow Video Library
 - Community Portal
 - Community Outreach and Partnerships
 - Logo Contest
 - Hate Crimes Advisory Committee
 - Courage in the Face of Hate Project (EGALE)



From Conversation to Action

- We have heard many dreams for the local Rainbow Community and seen some of the support foundations in place.
- Now we wish to see how we can make these dreams a reality!
- Break into small groups based on the colour of the paper that you drew from the hat.



From Conversation to Action

- **Making Dreams a Reality**
 - Break into small groups based on the colour of the paper that you drew from the hat.
 - In our groups, we will discuss a series of questions related to the dreams that have been shared.
 - Each group will have a WRRC volunteer to help facilitate the discussion.
 - Each group will (hopefully) have a volunteer willing to take notes on the group`s discussion.
 - There will be 10 – 20 minutes to discuss each question.



Making Dreams a Reality

- **Question Set #1**

- Of the dreams shared this evening, which resonated with you the most? Why?
- What want or need would fulfilling this dream meet?

.



Making Dreams a Reality

- **Question Set #2**

- Of the dreams presented, which would be the dreams that are the easiest to achieve? Most difficult to achieve?
- What would be some of the steps that would need to be accomplished in order to achieve the dream?



Making Dreams a Reality

- **Question Set #3**

- Of the dreams suggested, which ones would you:
 - personally support to make happen? Why?
 - be okay with other people pursuing, but would not be interested in personally supporting? Why?
 - not wish to see move forward at this time? Why?



From Conversation to Action

- **Which Dreams Do We Pursue?**
 - Now that we have had a chance to discuss the question sets in small groups, let's share with the group as a whole.
 - Responses will be recorded in the PowerPoint Slides.



Which Dreams Do We Pursue?

What was the most enlightening thing you learned from the small group discussion?

- The need to bring information/history to the younger generation.
- The clear enthusiasm and passion for change that exists in the community.
- The number and make-up of people participating in this evening's discussion.
 - Many resources represented.
 - Different ages and diversity of participants.
 - Participation from governmental representatives (Ken Seiling).
- Feeling safe and included in the discussion.



Which Dreams Do We Pursue?

What were the two dreams that your group felt were the hardest and easiest to achieve?

Hardest

- Getting the diverse community together (age, segregated groups by identity)
- Educating the educators/administrators/policy makers
- Broad goals that are difficult to measure
- Corporate sponsorships (local companies)
- Sustainable Management
- Involving youth
- Resistance to change
- Advocacy
- Rainbow history and cultural transmission

Easiest

- Community Centre-Physical Space
- Educating/advocating to organizations we have already partnered with
- Sharing/using resources we already have
- Online presence
- Political support
- Advocacy/action for school system/GSAs



Which Dreams Do We Pursue?

What elements of these dreams made them the hardest or easiest to achieve?

- Already there or existing
- Funding
- Getting help from partner associations (for space, etc.)
- Willingness to share versus sense of ownership
- Commitment (Personal)
- Combating social stigma
- Bringing everyone together (generations)
- Degree of visibility



Which Dreams Do We Pursue?

What were the two dreams that members of each group seemed most personally interesting in actively making a reality?

- Physical Community Centre
- Advocacy on behalf of Rainbow Youth within the school system
- Opportunities for Networking
 - Between existing groups
 - More opportunities for social interactions
 - Professional/Business
 - Increased community interaction will help promote community unity



Communicating The Dream

- We have explored a number of dreams for the local Rainbow Community and started prioritizing which dreams we may wish to pursue.
- However, our discussions have been limited to this room:
 - How do we communicate the dream to the wider community?
 - How do we connect with the individuals who can help make the dream a reality?



Communicating The Dream

- WRRC has the following communication channels available:
 - E-mail *yourwrrc@gmail.com*
 - Facebook *facebook.com/WRRC.Info*
 - Twitter *@YourWRRC*
 - Website *yourwrrc.ca*
 - Community Portal *outinwaterlooregion.ca*



Out In Waterloo Region



- New Community Web Portal



- *Planned Features Include:*
 - *Community Calendar, Articles, Directories*



Communicating The Dream

What are some ways that we can reach out and engage the local Rainbow community?

- Promote website within the community, especially partner organizations.
 - Encourage people to keep visiting site to get search engines to drive traffic to the site.
 - Promote reciprocal site listings- linking to other organizations and asking them to link to us.
 - Ask for local organizations to blog on the site.
- Get information out to community partners and ask them to share the information with their constituents.



Communicating The Dream

What are some ways that we can reach out and engage the local Rainbow community?

- Community Outreach – Finding people willing to go out to where the community is and spreading the word.
 - Local Establishments/Events: *Sizzle, Club Renaissance, GLOW, Rainbow Centre, ACCKWA, Out on the Shelf, Conestoga College*
 - One-on-one interactions
 - Affirming Church Congregations (e.g., Parkminster)
 - Presence at local festivals: *Take Back the Night, Multicultural, LINK, triPride, Non-violence, Rainbow Reels*



Communicating The Dream

What are some ways that we can reach out and engage the local Rainbow community?

- Find opportunities to build credibility within the local community
 - Have pictures and names pm websites and communications to create a visual association between issues and *real* people.



Thank You!

- Thank you for participating in this evening's dialogue!
 - Please stay to continue the conversation during our networking social!
- If you wish to continue to be involved with WRRC feel free to add your name to our volunteer sign-up sheets!
 - We will also be adding sign-up sheets for the top dreams participants wished to pursue!



Special Thanks

- Walper Terrace Hotel for donating this space for our dialogue.
- Heather of Tentacle Tarte Studio – the Winner of the WRRC Logo Contest.
- Thom Ryan for setting up the foundation for the OutInWaterlooRegion Website Portal.