

Greetings from Rainbow Elders Calgary!

Allow us to introduce ourselves! We are a passionate group of +55 LGBTQ+ volunteers who have come together to advocate for and support LGBTQ+ seniors.

We are a group created to address some of the concerns and issues that LGBTQ+ seniors face. For example, did you know that coming out remains an issue for some elder folk? Finding gay-friendly accommodation is an extreme concern as well as finding safe, accepting places to socialize and make new friends.

Recognizing this, we organized our first great social event in November, 2018: Winter Festivus! It was held at the Kerby Centre and featured entertainment from the Calgary Men's Chorus, as well as dancing, snacking, singing and even a chance to have a glass of wine. It was a wonderful success, so much so that we are organizing another similar event, Spring Fling which will have happened by the time you read this.

Rainbow Elders Calgary has grown from being an idea between friends to an energetic, active and determined organization in just over a year! At the moment we have no sponsors, but we have been delighted by the fact that we have managed to raise over \$1,000 through Go Fund Me and Facebook!

Earlier this year, on the recommendation of Rainbow Elders Calgary a major survey was conducted to help determine the housing and support needs for aging in the LGBTQ+ community. This important study was funded by the Calgary Homeless Foundation with coordination and research support from the SHARP foundation, Habitus Consulting Collective and Mount Royal University. we anxiously await the results of this ground-breaking research.



The highlight of the last year was being in the Calgary Pride Parade. We received a truly wonderful, in fact overwhelming reception from the crowds along 6th Avenue. It's safe to say that when we were young we never ever imagined that one day we would be proudly marching through downtown Calgary with our banner and flags to the cheers and applause from the thousands of spectators that lined the route. It was a powerful and emotional day for us all.

We invite you to find out more about us. Perhaps you or someone you know would be interested in joining us or being part of our activities. We meet at the Kerby Centre on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month. Of course, that's not always convenient for everyone but we do have a mailing list and here are some other ways of connecting:

Our website: rainbowelderscalgary.ca; on Facebook at facebook.com/rainbowcalgary or email us at RainbowEldersCalgary@gmail.com

We are honoured to have been asked to write for Kerby News. Until next month, go well and be safe.

Stephen Ditchburn