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Institute Website: www.iSMSS.ualberta.ca
Camp fYrefly Website: www.fyrefly.ualberta.ca
UofA Pride Week Website: www.prideweek.ualberta.ca
# Table of Contents

**The Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services: An Overview**

- iSMSS Mission and Vision: Infusing Practice with Research 3
- iSMSS Staff 2013-14 3
- iSMSS Endowment Campaign 4
  - iSMSS Honourary Committee 4
  - iSMSS Executive Committee 4-5

**The Studies Dimension 2012-13**

- Major Research Grants 5-6
- Publications 6
  - Academic Publications 6-7
  - Professional Publications and Resources Emanating from iSMSS Research 7-8
- Positions Held in Academic, Consultative, and Community Contexts 8
- Awards & Recognitions 8
- Graduate & Undergraduate Assistantships 8
- Knowledge Mobilization Activities 8-9
- Inside/OUT Speakers’ Series 9-10
- Michael Phair Leadership Award 10
- Stephen and Lynn Mandel Graduate Scholarship in Sexual and Gender Minority Studies 10

**The Services Dimension 2013-13**

- Safe Spaces Initiative 10
  - Safe Space Training & Workshops 11
- Safe Spaces Campus Climate Survey 11-12
- Gender Inclusivity at the University of Alberta 12
  - Name and Gender Marker Changes 12
  - Gender Inclusive Washrooms 13
  - Gender Inclusive Housing 13
- UAPS Sexual and Gender Minority Community Liaison Officer 13
- Professional Development for University Health Centre and Counselling & Clinical Services 13
- UofA Pride Week 13-15
- Educational Outreach Programming 15-16
- Camp fYrefly-Alberta 16
  - Camp fYrefly-Edmonton 16-19
  - Camp fYrefly-Calgary 19-21
- Support for Camp fYrefly-Alberta 21-23
- fYrefly in Schools 23-24
- Family Resilience Project 24-28
- Second Annual Gay-Straight Alliance Conference 28-29
The Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services: An Overview

iSMSS Mission and Vision: Infusing Practice with Research
The Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS) at The University of Alberta leads groundbreaking research that affects policy development, intervention, education and community outreach for sexual and gender minorities (SGM), nationally and globally.

Bringing research, teaching, institutional service, and community outreach together under one umbrella uniquely enables the Institute to intersect its studies and services functions in ways that create opportunities for innovative intellectual work and sustained educational and community outreach.

The Institute represents a distinct and holistic model, placing sexual and gender minority studies and services in a dynamic, interdependent relationship. Our research not only helps youth at large, but also guides professional development and education for teachers, social workers, family physicians, psychologists, guidance counselors, and other caring professionals, enabling them to be better resources and advocates for SGM youth and their families.

In addition, the Institute impacts policy and services for sexual and gender minorities nationally through its work with various agencies and organizations including the You Can Play Project, Office of Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer, the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

iSMSS Staff 2013-14
Dr. André P. Grace – Director of Research, EDPY
Dr. Kristopher Wells – Director of Programs & Services, EPS
Dr. Alvin Schrader – Adjunct Professor & Professor Emeritus
Beverly Clarke – Financial Administrator
Alison Brooks-Starks – fYrefly Program Coordinator, Edmonton
Tamara Gartner – Counselling Psychologist
Alexis Hillyard – Sexual and Gender Minority Equity Advisor
Michael Janz – “We Are Here: Edmonton Queer History” Project Assistant
Luis Marin – Website Administrator
Melinda McNie – fYrefly in Schools Facilitator, Edmonton
Nicholas Moore – fYrefly Program Coordinator, Calgary (in conjunction with Calgary Sexual Health Centre)
Michael Phair – Adjunct Professor and Education Facilitator
Brent Saccucci – Summer Camp fYrefly Program Assistant, Edmonton
iSMSS Endowment Campaign

As a University of Alberta fund development priority, we continue to work towards our goal of raising at least $5 million dollars to support the core operations and sustainability of the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services. The fund development campaign will support:

• Expanding Camp fYrefly into a national program. An overwhelming number of youth are currently applying to attend. Funds would go to hire a national outreach coordinator to work with local communities to set up and operate their own camps, travel, and produce and disseminate educational materials. Currently, each time a new camp is established, our two faculty members must dedicate weeks of their time to work with the community groups on the camp curriculum, training staff, and evaluations.
• Expanding research programs and services. Funding would support programming, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers.
• Training the next generation of researchers to focus on the intellectual sphere of ideas (the studies function) and the organic sphere of action (the service function). iSMSS will continue to recruit master’s, doctoral, and postdoctoral students from across Canada and the world to explore the dynamic interactions that can be established between innovative research, policy development, community outreach, and service provision.
• Creating an endowment to partially support core operating funding. That would provide funding stability and reallocate resources to continue to develop innovative programming.

iSMSS Honourary Committee

• Salah Bachir, President, Cineplex Media
• Anthony Bidulka, Author
• Scott Brison, MP, Kings-Hants, Nova Scotia
• Brian Burke, Calgary Flames, President of Hockey Operations
• Olivia Chow, MP, Trinity-Spadina, Ontario
• John deC. Evans, President & CEO Trilogy Group of Companies & OPUS Hotels
• Dr. Hedy Fry, MP, Vancouver Centre
• Ralph Goodale, MP, Wascana, Saskatchewan
• Sandra Huculak, ATB Financial, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility & Community Investment
• Linda Hughes, Chancellor Emeritus
• Don Iveson, Mayor, City of Edmonton
• k.d. lang, Musician
• Stephen and Lynn Mandel, Former Mayor of the City of Edmonton
• J. Herb McFaul, President, McFaul Consulting
• Anne McLellan, Former Deputy Prime Minister of Canada
• Harlan Pruden (Cree), Director & Co-Founder of NorthEast Two-Spirit Society
• Doug Stollery, Q.C., & Scott Graham, Stollery Charitable Foundation
• Mark Tewksbury, Olympic Gold Medalist

iSMSS Executive Committee

• Frank Calder
• Danielle Campbell
Key iSMSS fund development events and meetings were held in Vancouver, Calgary, and at World Pride in Toronto, which included a benefit concert hosted by Salah Bachir, featuring k.d. lang. Please visit [http://www.ismss.ualberta.ca/ourcampaign.htm](http://www.ismss.ualberta.ca/ourcampaign.htm) for more iSMSS Campaign details.

**The Studies Dimension 2013-14**

At iSMSS, our research program is built to incorporate studies of inclusive lifelong learning; sexual and gender minorities and our issues concerned with recognition, respect, access, and accommodation; resilience as a non-linear, asset-creating process; policymaking and its implementation in caring practices in institutional and community contexts; and the preparatory and continuing education of caring professionals, including teachers, school administrators, school counsellors, and school psychologists. As we work to advance research in these areas, the iSMSS research program is an ideal fit with the theme area *transforming research in education*, which is acknowledged as the Faculty of Education’s recognized research strength in the University of Alberta’s Strategic Research Plan. In keeping with the educational imperative to be there for every student, and the healthcare imperative to do no harm, the iSMSS research program aims to transform research by opening up possibilities for transdisciplinary research on sexual and gender minorities, especially vulnerable children and youth, with the goals of improving social, cultural, and comprehensive health education for SGM youth as well as SGM-inclusive preparatory education and continuing development for educators and healthcare professionals.

At iSMSS, we bring research to bear on deficiencies and absences in policymaking and institutional and caring professional practices in order to advance SGM inclusivity and equity in keeping with Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that provides protection on grounds of individual differences. In terms of practical applications, research outcomes are intended to help SGM youth to grow into resilience so they can mediate life in schools, families, healthcare, and other contexts. It is also intended to guide the professional preparation and development of key stakeholders such as teachers and guidance counsellors, equipping them to be better advocates and resources for these vulnerable youth.

Currently, Dr. Grace (Educational Psychology) and Dr. Wells (Educational Policy Studies) are conducting research and publishing and presenting their work in academic, professional association, and community venues in local, national, and international contexts. iSMSS research
is driven by four key goals aimed at making life better NOW for sexual and gender minority (SGM or lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) youth. These goals are to:

- develop evidence-based approaches to comprehensive policy development and implementation focused on meeting the needs of SGM youth in education and healthcare;
- advance inclusive education, including comprehensive health education, for SGM youth, drawing on new studies that conceptualize growing into resilience as a non-linear, asset-building process of assisting youth to problem solve and thrive;
- assist families and the significant adults in the lives of SGM youth to be resources and supports; and
- improve the educational preparation and continuing development of educators and healthcare professionals so they can better serve SGM youth.

**Major Research Grants**

2014-2015  
Technology Evaluation in the Elderly Network – Networks of Centres of Excellence Program: $100,000.00 – Dr. Wells is a Research Collaborator with Dr. Brian de Vries & Dr. Gloria Gutman, Principal Investigators, Simon Fraser University.  
Project Title: *Fostering End-of-Life Conversations, Community and Care among LGBT Older Adults*

2014-2015  
Edmonton Heritage Council: $14,300 – Dr. Wells, Dr. Schrader, and Mr. Phair are Co-Investigators along with the Edmonton Pride Festival Society.  
Project Title: *“We are Here”: Edmonton Queer History Project*

2013-2018  
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Grant: $489,293.00 – Dr. Wells & Mr. Michael Phair are Research Collaborators with Dr. Deanna Williamson, Principal Investigator, Department of Human Ecology, University of Alberta.  
Project Title: *Family Functioning in Everyday Life: The Experiences of Families with Young Children and Diverse Compositions and Ethno-Cultural Origins*

2012-2017  
CIHR operating grant: $1,977,930 or $399,586 per year for 5 years – Dr. Grace and Dr. Wells are Co-Investigators with Dr. Elizabeth Saewyc, Principal Investigator, UBC School of Nursing.  
Project Title: *Reducing Stigma, Promoting Resilience: Population Health Interventions for LGBTQ Youth*

**iSMSS Publications**

**Academic Publications**


**Professional Publications and Resources Emanating from iSMSS Research**

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (forthcoming). *Respecting and accommodating sexual and gender minorities in Canadian culture, society, and education: A pan-Canadian handbook of policies, practices, and resources.* Ottawa: Canadian Teachers’ Federation. [This book is completed and we are working to have it published in English and French by the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, with support from the Nova Scotia Teachers’ Union and other provincial/territorial teachers’ associations.]


Positions Held in Academic, Consultative, and Community Contexts

- Dr. Wells was appointed as Special Advisor to the Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities.
- Dr. Wells serves as the Book Review Editor for the International Journal of LGBT Youth (Taylor & Francis).
- Dr. Wells serves on the following committees external to the University of Alberta:
  - Board Member, REACH Edmonton (Elected)
  - Co-Chair, Edmonton Police Chief’s Community Advisory Council (Elected)
  - Chair, Edmonton Police Service Sexual Minorities Liaison Committee (Elected)
  - Member, Alberta Hate Crimes Committee (Appointed)
  - Member, Edmonton Public Schools Superintendent’s Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Advisory Committee (Appointed)
  - Invited Reviewer, Oxford University Press

Awards and Recognitions

- 2014 – Alberta Teachers’ Association’s Public Education Award. Presented to Dr. Wells for his significant contributions advancing the interests of Alberta’s public education system.
- 2014 – CASE District Communication Award: Gold for Fundraising, Special Event, & Other Communications for iSMSS Case for Support.

Graduate and Undergraduate Assistantships

During 2013-2014, Dr. Wells mentored a graduate student (Anastasia Kulpa) for both fall and winter terms to work on an equity audit of sexual orientation and gender identity policies in Canadian postsecondary institutions. As part of this mentorship, Dr. Wells and Ms. Kulpa co-presented a referred paper presentation at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in May, 2014. Dr. Wells also worked extensively with a doctoral student from the Department of English whom he mentored as a Book Review Assistant for the International Journal of LGBT Youth.

Knowledge Mobilization Activities

- In 2013-2014, Dr. Wells made over 150 media appearances, including featured interviews on CTV National News, CBC, and on BBC Radio, which reached over 3 million listeners.
- Dr. Wells provided 5 keynote addresses, 6 national presentations, and 27 invited talks. Of particular note was the invited public lecture co-presented with Wade Davis, Executive Director of the You Can Play Project, to the 83rd Congress of the Humanities & Social Sciences at Brock University. This featured plenary session was co-sponsored by
Association of Canadian Deans of Education, Canadian Sociological Association, and Federation of the Social Sciences and Humanities.

- Dr. Wells published 3 featured opinion editorials, which ran in CanWest newspapers across Canada. One opinion editorial was also featured in the United Kingdom.

- Dr. Wells worked extensively with the Government of Alberta to provide briefings on the Marriage Act, Vital Statistics Act, and Section 11.1 of the Alberta Human Rights Act. Dr. Wells was also served as an expert consultant to several government roundtables and events, which included the Sexual Violence Framework, Alberta Children’s Charter, Alberta Education Act, Domestic Violence and Screening Intervention Policy, Child Intervention Roundtable, & Bullying Prevention Strategy.

- Dr. Wells was invited to work with Edmonton Public Schools, Lethbridge Public School Division, Lloydminster Public School Division, Public School Boards’ Association of Alberta, and the Alberta Teachers’ Association to provide specialized training, professional development and policy support on sexual orientation and gender identity issues in K-12 schools.

- Dr. Wells provided expert consultation to the Edmonton Police Service and assisted in two homicide investigations.

**Inside/OUT Speakers’ Series**
The Institute also plays a vital role in campus knowledge mobilization through ventures such as its Inside/OUT Speakers’ Series. iSMSS hosts monthly seminars during the academic year that focus on SGM research in education and culture. These seminars are designed as an interdisciplinary engagement for academics, postdoctoral fellows, undergraduate and graduate students, and community members. The 2013-14 Inside/OUT Speakers’ Series program featured:

- **September 19 – Narratives of Queer Embodiment**
  - An undergraduate research panel discussion with Melissa Fabrizio, Faculty of Arts, Department of Philosophy, University of Alberta; and Danielle Normandeau, Faculty of Arts, Department of Women’s and Gender Studies, University of Alberta

- **October 24 – Holy Homophobia: Doctrinal Disciplining of Non-Heterosexuals in Canadian Catholic Schools**
  - Presented by Dr. Tonya Callaghan, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Calgary

- **November 21 – Trans* Experiences: Reflections on the Trans Day of Remembrance**
  - A conversation around transphobia and gender-based and violence with Trans* community members

- **January 16 – From Theory to Practice to Theory: Queer-Positive Health Care as Skill Acquisition**
  - Presented by Dr. Cressida Heyes, Department of Philosophy, University of Alberta

- **February 13 – Same-Sex Domestic Violence Workshop**
Presented by Jane Oxenbury, Registered Psychologist, Peer Support Services for Abused Women, Calgary, Alberta

- March 6 – *Understanding and Reconstructing Self-Injury Among Sexual Minorities*
  - Presented by Dr. Andrew Estefan, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Calgary

- April 3 – *Dynamics of Female Virginity in Contemporary Iran*
  - Presented by Elli Dehnavi, PhD Student, Comparative Literature, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta

**Michael Phair Leadership Award**
The Michael Phair Leadership Award is the first SGM-specific *undergraduate award* in the history of the University of Alberta. Selection is based on demonstrated leadership qualities and involvement in extracurricular and community activities. Preference is given to undergraduate students who have demonstrated commitment to the advancement of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, two-spirited, and queer communities. The 2013 recipients were:

- Brent Saccucci, Faculty of Education
- Breanne Hart-Dowhun, Faculty of Arts

**Stephen and Lynn Mandel Graduate Scholarship in Sexual and Gender Minority Studies**
The Stephen and Lynn Mandel Graduate Scholarship in Sexual and Gender Minority Studies is the first SGM-specific *graduate scholarship* to be offered in the history of the University of Alberta. Thanks to an anonymous founding donor this scholarship is awarded annually to a graduate student at the University of Alberta with superior academic achievement and quality research focused on sexual and gender minority studies and their application in advocating for sexual and gender minorities in educational and community contexts. The 2014 recipient was:

- Derritt Mason, Faculty of Arts

**The Services Dimension 2013-14**

**Safe Spaces Initiative**
The Safe Spaces Initiative (SSI) is a University of Alberta project that iSMSS developed and implemented. This Initiative, which began in summer 2011, is built on the premise that our University campuses should be safe places – physically, emotionally, and intellectually – for SGM students, faculty, and staff. This means that all students, faculty, and staff are recognized, respected, and accommodated across identities and differences in all aspects of University life. SGM individuals on campus should feel free to express themselves without fear of judgment or criticism, and have their concerns addressed and needs supported by all University employees, policies, procedures, and facilities.
Safe Spaces Training & Workshops
During the 2013-14 academic year, diverse professional development workshops were provided to University of Alberta groups. All workshops were customized to meet the individual needs and context of each campus group. SSI workshops highlighted meaningful strategies for creating an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere for students and staff of all sexual orientations and gender identities within the university community. Over the past year, SSI workshops addressed a number of key objectives related to inclusive practice, including:

- Exploring and engaging with LGBTQ terminology;
- Understanding the lived and learned realities of SGM students and staff;
- Identifying strategies for creating inclusive and safe environments for SGM students and staff;
- Engaging with the key findings and recommendations of the 2103 Safe Spaces Campus Climate Report;
- Participating in a meaningful Q&A period; and
- Identifying useful campus and community resources and supports.

During the 2013/2014 academic year, SSI Workshops were delivered to the following groups:

- Residence Life / Residence Services
- Lister Floor Coordinators
- School of Public Health
- Sexual Assault Centre Staff & Volunteers
- NAIT Staff
- Education Students’ Association
- Campus Community Helpers
- Campus Ambassadors
- Student Union Services
- OUTreach Student Group
- Health and Wellness Team Volunteers (UWS)
- Northwest Association of College and University Housing Officers (NWACUHO)

Keynote Address
Three Safe Spaces Network Orientations were delivered, increasing our Network membership to 123 individuals. An updated UofA campus resource directory and Safe Contact membership list is now available on the iSMSS website.

The Safe Spaces Initiative was also involved in supporting the creation of a new Safe Spaces program at NAIT. This involved development consultation and two workshops with their staff.

Safe Spaces Campus Climate Survey
The University of Alberta Safe Spaces Campus Climate Report, released in fall 2013, highlights the development, findings, and recommendations of the first research conducted on the campus climate for sexual and gender minority (LGBTQ) undergraduate students at the University of Alberta (Kinkartz, Wells, & Hillyard, 2013). Our safe spaces survey was sent to a random sample of 10,000 undergraduate students and had an impressive response of 2,046 students who
completed the survey, which represents one of the largest and most comprehensive surveys of its kind to be conducted at a post-secondary institution in Canada.

Our survey examined the following key areas: student demographics with 17% of survey respondents identifying as sexual and gender minorities; campus atmosphere; perceptions of acceptance and safety; prevalence and impact of homophobic and transphobic language and attitudes; experiences of coming out; impacts of hetero and gender normativity; and views about the inclusiveness of campus facilities (e.g., residences, campus athletics, and sports teams).

Based on survey responses, themes from student focus groups, and a review of sexual and gender minority inclusive best practices for post-secondary institutions, 7 key findings and themes were revealed and 26 recommendations were made in the following areas: (1) Institutional Supports; (2) Academic Resources; (3) Student Services; and (4) Campus Protective Services.

Generally, survey results indicate University of Alberta campuses are mostly perceived as safe, inclusive, and supportive places for sexual and gender minority students. However, the prevalence of homophobic language and a high percentage of students expressing serious concerns with being open about their sexual orientation and gender identity strongly indicate how there is still much work to do if sexual and gender minority students are to feel fully included, welcomed, and respected on our campuses. The full report can be found online at: http://www.ismss.ualberta.ca/SafeSpacesClimate2013

The findings from the Safe Spaces Report were presented to General Faculties Council (GFC) Executive Committee, Dean’s Advisory Council, UofA Senate, and the Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE). Notably, the Provost supported the full implementation of all 26 recommendations in the report.

Gender inclusiveness at the University of Alberta

Over the past year iSMSS, along with other UofA stakeholders, has been working to improve and expand the University of Alberta’s gender inclusive practices and procedures on our campuses. The work has included the following outcomes:

Name and Gender Marker Changes

- The Office of the Registrar is continuing to take important steps towards greater gender inclusivity at the University of Alberta. These changes, which encompass name changes, preferred first name usage, and gender marker changes, will help University of Alberta systems and the overall campus climate become more inclusive of our trans-identified and genderqueer students. As of January 2014, Instructor Self Service now displays a student’s preferred first name on the class roster and grade roster accessed through Bear Tracks. In addition, the grade approval page within the university’s student information system has also been altered to display a student’s preferred first name to ensure continuity of name across the electronic grading process.
- Students wishing to have their gender marker changed on their University record may now do so by supplying a letter of intent to the Office of the Registrar. Students do not need to provide a letter from a medical professional or proof of sex reassignment surgery.
Gender Inclusive Washrooms

- The Gender-based Violence Prevention Project and the Safe Spaces Initiative have identified single use, all-gender washrooms and mapped them online in order to enhance washroom accessibility for trans-identified and genderqueer individuals on campus. To access this map, go to the UofA website homepage, click on maps, and select North Campus. Then choose ‘Quickfinds’ and click on ‘All-Gender Washrooms’. This map is updated on an ongoing basis.

Gender Inclusive Housing

- With the assistance of iSMSS, Residence Services has now formalized the process for students seeking gender inclusive housing options in University of Alberta Residences. Gender Inclusive Housing is a housing option in which students are assigned a unit regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression. Residence Services is committed to working with all students to meet their housing needs in an environment that values diversity and promotes dignity of all people.

UAPS Sexual and Gender Minority Community Liaison Officer

- As identified in the Safe Spaces Report recommendations, Peace Officer Stephanie Hartwig has been appointed as the Sexual and Gender Minority Community Liaison Officer for University of Alberta Protective Services (UAPS). She is available to address any sexual orientation and/or gender identity questions or concerns related to the safety and security of those in the University of Alberta community.

Professional Development for University Health Centre and Counselling & Clinical Services

- iSMSS provided 4 professional development workshops in the areas of LGBTQ and gender inclusivity to the physicians, psychologists and psychiatrists at the University Health Centre and Counselling and Clinical Services.

UofA Pride Week

University of Alberta Pride Week was held February 26 to March 8, 2014 and was a tremendous and growing success. The 2nd annual pride week celebrations featured 27 core events on 3 campuses (North Campus, Augustana, Campus Saint Jean). Notably, UofA residences organized and held over 20 additional pride week events.

Key contributing factors to the growth and success of UofA Pride Week included key learnings from organizing last year’s inaugural pride week, utilizing more volunteers (more than 37 unique volunteers who donated over 169 hours), starting the planning process earlier, having Laverne Cox as a featured speaker, and diversifying the nature and variety of events to cater to multiple interests, audiences, and campus needs.

North Campus Pride Events

- Pink T-Shirt Day (with over 1,000 t-shirts sold)
- 8: A Staged Reading (30+ Attendees)
- The Coming Out Monologues (100+ Attendees)
- Dean of Students’ Rainbow Hot Chocolate Giveaway (400+ Attendees)
The Pride Alumni Chapter: The Fabulous Night at FAB! (62 Attendees)
Hillel’s Film Screening “Trembling before G-d” (18 Attendees)
Traveling Tickle Trunk Workshop (34 Attendees)
2-Day Intersections of Queer Symposium (35+ Attendees)
Rainbow Bannock and Stew (35 Attendees)
GLBTQ Sports and Athletics in a Post-Sochi World (40 Attendees)
Inside/OUT Speakers’ Series Presentation (9 Attendees)
Queer Art Night (50 Attendees)
Pride Parade (250+ Attendees)
Vogue Workshop + Paris is Burning Screening (25 Attendees)
OUTreach Drag Show (300 Attendees)
‘Ain't I a Woman: My Journey to Womanhood’ Featured Keynote Address by Laverne Cox (1000+ Attendees)

Augustana Pride Week Events
Pink Shirt Day and Rainbow Hot Chocolate (50+ Attendees)
Transgender 101 (15 Attendees)
Bake Sale and Button Making
“Call Me Kuchu” Film Screening (10 Attendees)
Keeping the Faith (15 Attendees)
Travelling Tickle Trunk Presentation (10 Attendees)
Rainbow Photo (100+ Attendees)
“Two Spirits” Film Screening (50 Attendees)

Campus Saint Jean Pride Week Events
Dean of Students’ Rainbow Hot Chocolate Give Away (120 Attendees)
Queer Film Showing (20 Attendees)

UofA Residences Pride Week Events
Henday
Lister Wide Aerial Photo
Painting Windows in Main Henday Stairwell
Pride Rock Night
Rainbow Cupcakes (350+ given out)
Residence Floor Pride Contest

East Campus Village
Rainbow Tree Wrapping

Pinecrest and Tamarack
Pride Flags in Lobbies

Schaffer
Glow in the Dark Dodgeball Tournament
Decorating the Main Floor for Pride and hosting TED Talks/other educational videos on Pride Positivity Lemonade
Educational Outreach Programming

During the 2013-2014 academic year, iSMSS maintained its strong commitment to educational outreach in the Faculty of Education and across other faculties and professional bodies at the University of Alberta. We also continued educational outreach in schools and to community groups.

Total number of educational outreach sessions delivered: 46
Total number of participants reached: 1161

Sessions that iSMSS provides are individualized to address a) specific course objectives, b) unique requests from specific instructors/teachers, c) the knowledge base of the students, or d) the unique professional locations and needs of pre-professional students.

iSMSS educational outreach programming includes these key objectives:

- Understand LGBTQ terminology;
- Understand our rights and responsibilities as teachers/educators with regard to LGBTQ inclusion in relation to such topics as policymaking and the law, addressing homo/bi/transphobic language and bullying, dealing with difficult parents, family diversity, and transgender youth in sports;
- Highlight strategies for creating inclusive educational spaces for SGM students;
- Identify risks and resiliency factors surrounding issues of homo/bi/transphobic bullying;
- Challenge assumptions and stereotypes that arise in sociocultural interactions in schools, healthcare facilities, and other institutional contexts;
- Explore societal structures such as heterosexism, sexism, and homo/bi/transphobia;
- Understand the lived and learned realities of SGM youth, with special attention given to SGM youth living in intersections such as those with disabilities;
Consider issues of access to healthcare and the overall health implications for SGM individuals; Identify resources on campus, in professional contexts, and in the wider community; and Help instructors and students identify ways they can be allies in addressing SGM issues in their classrooms and schools.

Faculty of Education Classes Visited
- EDU 100: Contexts of Education
- EDU 250: Introduction to the Teaching Profession
- EDPS 310: Classroom Management
- EDPS 410: Ethics and Law in Teaching
- EDPS 360: Society and Education
- EDPY 305: Learning, instructional practice and educational psychology
- EDPY 404: Adolescent Development
- EDPY 454: Teaching Children with Challenging Behaviour
- EDPY 456: Consultation and Collaboration in Special Education
- EDPY 542: Cross Cultural Counseling
- EDPY 633: Advanced Counseling Practicum
- EDSE 333: Health Education
- EDSE 447/451: Physical Education
- EDEL 457/458: Early Childhood – Theory and Practice

Other University of Alberta Departments and Classes Visited
- Physical Education and Recreation (HE ED 110)
- Human Ecology (HCOL 360)
- Sociology (SOC 224)
- Education Week
- 211 Staff Networker information Session

Other Academic, Government, and Community Institutions Visited
- Ontracks Consulting
- Grant MacEwan University: Social Work and Health Education (Sociology of Gender)
- Kings University College
- Concordia (EDPS 341-B: Psychology of Exceptional Children and Youth)

iSMSS has also maintained a strong commitment to volunteerism over the past academic year. In 2013/2014 iSMSS hosted 8 student volunteers from the UofA’s Community Service Learning Program.

Camp fYrefly-Alberta

Camp fYrefly (www.CampfYrefly.ca) is the Institute’s award-winning summer leadership program, which is a university-community educational outreach project that focuses on the
educational, health, safety, and socialization needs of SGM youth. At Camp fYrefly, young people engage in an array of arts-informed workshops, which strive to help youth develop personal resilience and leadership skills so they can become agents for positive social change in their schools, families, and communities. Over 1,000 youth have attended Camp fYrefly since its inception in 2004. The transformative power of the camp lies in its ambition to make life better NOW for SGM youth.

There were major milestones for camp in 2013: Camp fYrefly celebrated the 10th Anniversary of its Edmonton location, the 5th Anniversary in Saskatchewan, and held its inaugural camp in Calgary. Over 150 youth attended these three camp programs. In addition to opportunities to attend an eclectic array of workshops focused on individual development, socialization, comprehensive health, leadership, and growing into resilience, campers also enjoyed the spirited arts-informed queer pedagogy that is at the heart of our artist-in-residence program.

**Camp fYrefly-Edmonton Artist-in-Residence**

Each year, as part of the Artist-in-Residence Program, Camp fYrefly welcomes an emerging or established contemporary Canadian artist who has shown a commitment to innovation, exploration, community outreach, and building public understanding of sex, sexual, and gender differences. Vivek Shraya was the Artist-in-Residence for Camp fYrefly-Edmonton 2013. Vivek is a Toronto-based multimedia artist, working in the mediums of music, performance, literature and film. Vivek creates and delivers workshops and guest lectures about writing, art, gender, sexuality and homophobia. At Camp fYrefly-Edmonton, Vivek provided the following workshop to small groups of campers:

- **Say Something: Lyrics with a Message** with Vivek Shraya, Artist in Residence

  Whether life’s disabilities  
  Left you outcast, bullied or teased  
  Rejoice and love yourself today  
  – Lady Gaga (Born This Way)

  Because of the accessible nature of songs, they have the capacity to heal, inspire, and even change minds. In this workshop, we will examine the power of songs and how to incorporate politics, passion, and a message into songwriting/lyrics. Followed by writing exercises.

Vivek also presented two featured sessions for the entire camp; a reading from his book *God Loves Hair* followed by a Q&A, and a documentary screening and discussion of his new multi-media project, *What I Love About Being Queer*. Campers had the opportunity to have their photo taken as part of this project, and youth wrote a caption about what they love about being queer.

**Camp fYrefly-Edmonton Youth Participant Demographics**

Participating in Camp fYrefly is a powerful and unique experience, which focuses on developing leadership qualities through activities that challenge youth to explore their identity, build resilience, and enhance self- and social-esteem. Camp fYrefly would like each youth participant to be able to return home with a more “resilient mindset” and a support network of positive friendships, trusted adult mentors, and an empowered sense of self.
In 2013, over 90 youth applied to attend Camp fYrefly as either a camper or youth leader. While the majority of applications came from the Edmonton area, there was significant interest in the Camp from youth across Canada. 2013 also saw a decrease in average participant age, which was 17.1 years.

**Programming at Camp fYrefly-Edmonton**

All camp programming is guided by input from youth and facilitated by trained educators and youth workers in collaboration with a team of artists, dramatists, educators, and community and youth leaders. The camp, guided by an arts-based educational philosophy, is jam-packed with dance, drama, music, writing, visual art, empowerment and reflection exercises, anti-oppression work, personal growth opportunities, healthy socialization, and in-depth learning activities about specific youth topics and social issues.

At Camp fYrefly 2013, the wide range of community members and organizations that presented workshops included:

- Trans* 101: An Introduction to Transgender Identities: Daniel Tallack & David Nyffeler
- Youth Rights: Drawing From Experience: Melanie Lukevich, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
- I Am Color: Kathy Paterson
- Self Defense: SiFu Carol Mckinlay and Micheal Johnson, Team Edmonton
- Healthy Multiple Masculinities: Parker Leflar & Blair Millar
- How to be a Financial Jedi: ATB Financial
- Youth Mentoring: Unleashing Your Inner Superhero: Dayna Hobbs & Ellyse Lambie, Alberta Mentoring Partnership
- How Are You Powerful?: Daley Laing, APRIG
- Choices, Drugs and You!: Christina Murray, Michell Chaffey, Jennie McLester, Alberta Health Services - Youth Addiction Services Edmonton
- Actually, It’s Sir: Navigating Trans* Masculinities: Daniel Tallack and David Nyffeler
- Emotional Fitness: Melinda McNie and Larry Tibble
- A yoga workshop!: Katie Mahon
- Your Voice Matters: Matt Schmitt and Meera Dave, Youth Speak Edmonton
- ISCWR DRAG 101: Empress Vanity Fair and other volunteers, Imperial Sovereign Court of the Wild Rose
- Self-Awareness & Relaxation through Improvisation: Kathy Paterson
- Love Yourself, Be Yourself, You’re the Change: Quetzela Carson
- Discover Who You Really Are: Rhonda Fedor, Transforming Hearts International
- Exploring Equality the Rights Way!: The John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights
- Drawn on the Body: Stephanie Crowley
- Don’t Wear Pointy Shoes!: Dr. Daniel McKennitt, MD, University of Alberta, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, Division of Preventative Medicine
- Boot Camp: Team Edmonton
- Healthy Sexuality and Healthy Relationships: Brian Parker, Options Sexual Health and Nicholas Moore, Calgary Sexual Health Centre
In addition to the workshops, as part of our Camp fYrefly “field trip” tradition, campers were able to visit Edmonton’s lively Whyte Avenue to view the film “I Am” by film maker Sonali Gulati at Edmonton’s historic Princess Theatre.

**Camp fYrefly-Calgary**
The inaugural Camp fYrefly-Calgary took place July 11-14, 2013 and exceeded all expectations. The Calgary community rallied in a remarkable way to help bring Camp fYrefly to Southern Alberta. Calgary Sexual Health Centre was our organizational partner and they provided incredible leadership and support, without which Camp fYrefly-Calgary would not have been possible.

Over 50 youth attended Camp fYrefly-Calgary, which was held in Cochrane Alberta at a Girl Guides camp facility. While the majority of youth came from the Calgary area, there was a number of youth who attended from various rural communities including Airdrie, Okotoks, Claresholm, Bow Island, and Lethbridge. Campers ranged in age from 14 to 24, with the average camper age of about 17 years old. Camp fYrefly-Calgary was also supported by an inspiring group of youth leaders and adult volunteers.

**Camp fYrefly-Calgary Artist-in-Residence**
The camp’s programming was anchored by Antyx, who served as Camp fYrefly-Calgary’s 1st Artist-in-Residence. Antyx is a local Calgary community arts company that uses arts and community development processes to create opportunities for youth to become more engaged in their community, build their community, and experience increased community connections. More about Antyx’s work at Camp fYrefly can be viewed online: [http://www.fyrefly.ualberta.ca/Calgary](http://www.fyrefly.ualberta.ca/Calgary)

**Programming at Camp fYrefly-Calgary**
Camp fYrefly-Calgary situated in the foothills of the Canadian Rockies included a variety of outdoor programming and unique experiences. In addition to the camp’s arts-based programming, campers were fortunate to experience the best the Canadian Rockies has to offer with a guided hiking and white water rafting experience, which was truly a camp highlight. Youth participated in a guided-rafting excursion through the exhilarating and brisk whitewater rapids of the Kananaskis. Other youth went on a guided mountain hiking trip and even learned how to throw boomerangs from an expert guide.

In addition to these unique outdoor experiences, Camp fYrefly-Calgary also offered a wide array of experiential and fun learning opportunities for campers. For example, some of the camp-wide programming included:

- Morning Yoga and Meditation
- Camp fYre songs, games, snacks and activities
- A Professional’s Panel featuring inspiring LGBTQ professionals including graphic design artists, musicians, oil and gas executives, teachers, and an RCMP officer
- A Talent Showcase where youth got to share their many talents
- Positive Relationships and Healthy Sexuality Workshops
A Camp fYrefly “Amazing Race” event that took campers through an exciting and fun series of games and activities to encourage, engage, and build relationships with their peers

A Movie Night with Calgary Fairy Tales, which included a powerful and fun series of LGBTQ themed-films

The camp also featured over 25 workshops, ranging from topics including queer history, knowing your rights, sexuality and spirituality, same-sex families, media studies, self-defense, Latin dance, financial literacy, and many other interactive workshops.

These were many fantastic contributions made from community members and local organizations in support of Camp fYrefly-Calgary. Some of these workshops included:

- Fun’d Your Passion: Empowering yourself financially and beyond – ATB Financial
- Self-Esteem and Self-Defense – Tao of Peace, Chris Leigh-Smith
- Trans 101 and 102 – James Demers, Mason Jenkins
- Youth Rights: Drawing from Experience – Melanie McIntosh
- Pop-up Vide Slam Poetry and Spoken Word – Antyx
- Youth Mentoring: Unleashing your Inner Superhero – Alberta Mentoring Partnership
- Write Out Loud – Erin Dingle & Layla Messner
- In and Out: Critical Reading Media Images of Sexual and Gender Minority Youth – Dr. Shirley Steinberg, University of Calgary
- Fire & Wire 2gether – Jessica Dollard
- Find Your Voice: LGBTQ Youth and the Law – CLERC
- Queer History – James Demers
- Coming Out – Coming Out Monologues
- Interactive Mural – Dean Stanton
- Latin Dance – Adrian Rodriguez
- Spoken Word Slam – Antyx
- Make Them Hear You – Calgary Men’s Chorus
- Become a Freedom Fighter Against Homophobia in Catholic Schools – Dr. Tonya Callaghan, University of Calgary
- Drag Workshop – The Fake Mustache Drag King Troupe
- Roping and More with ARGRA
- God and Gays – Pam Rocker, Hillhurst United Church
- Getting Your Point Across Digitally – John Leung, Dan Clapson, Mike Morrison, Nancy Miller, & Chris Harper
- Stop-Motion Animation – Mallory Augustyn
- It’s Bling-tastic: Making Jewelry an Expression of You – Gael James and Jacklynn Walker
- Inspiring Possibilities: Stories of Same-Sex Families – Debb Hurlock, Diana Reid, Dan Jeffreys, & Paul Knibbs
- Depression and Anxiety: Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts – Sarah Owens, Melanie Khu, Ena Vukatana, & Vanessa Schell
As part of the camp’s concluding activities, a community resource fair and a special family and friends of LGBTQ youth workshop were held to help support family and friends and connect them to local resources and supports.

Perhaps nothing better describes the magic that occurred at Camp fYrefly-Calgary than the words of the participants themselves:

- “It’s indescribable. I’ve already surpassed any expectation I had, and its only been day one!” - Youth Camper
- “The beauty of having community after years of isolation, pain and suffering, now I can cry and write with tears of joy rather then pain. Thank you fYrefly!” - Youth Camper
- “[Camp has been] the most impactful moment in my life so far. I’m in awe of how important this camp is.” - Adult Volunteer
- “The most humbling, life altering, positive, unbelievable, and rewarding experience I have ever had.” - Adult Volunteer

Support for Camp fYrefly-Alberta
Camp fYrefly exists with support from many individuals, community organizations, churches, businesses, and corporations from across North America. Annual camp operating costs for each location are in excess of $50,000. We raise these funds from a variety of sources, which include fundraisers, community partnerships, corporate supporters, and grants.

Camp fYrefly-Alberta receives support – financial and/or in-kind – from the University of Alberta, University of Regina, Calgary Sexual Health Centre, Calgary Community Foundation, Chinook Foundation, AGRA, Apollo & Friends, Canadian Teachers’ Federation, Alberta Teachers’ Association, Government of Alberta, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, City of Edmonton, Edmonton Police Service, Edmonton Public Teachers’ Local, Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities, JTMF-West, Alberta’s Promise, TELUS, ATB Financial, PFLAG Canada, Hillhurst United Church, St Thomas United Church, McDougall United Church, St. Paul’s United Church, Southminster Steinhauser United Church, Unitarian Fellowship of Red Deer, Urban Spirits Rotary Club of Edmonton, Womonspace, Woody’s Pub & Grill, Imperial Sovereign Court of the Wild Rose and Imperial Sovereign Court of the Chinook Arch. In addition to these organizations, hundreds of individual donors from across Canada support Camp fYrefly. As well, iSMSS and Calgary Sexual Health Centre staff and volunteers host several events annually to promote Camp fYrefly and raise funds.

Events Throughout the Year
While Camp fYrefly only takes place for 4 days during the summer, iSMSS and Calgary Sexual Health Centre staff and volunteers host a variety of events throughout the year to promote Camp fYrefly and raise funds to ensure for program sustainability.
Edmonton Pride Festival
As part of Edmonton’s 2013 Pride Festival, iSMSS staff, volunteers, and youth marched in the annual Pride Parade. We showcased our giant inflatable fYrefly mascot again this year. We also hosted a resource and information booth in Churchill Square. We also continued to offer the popular Queer History Bus Tour and partnered on a community event with the Art Gallery of Alberta.

Calgary Pride Festival
In recognition of the overwhelming positive response Camp fYrefly-Calgary has received, we were honoured to have been recognized as the 2013 Calgary Pride Parade Grand Marshal. Dozens of campers, adult volunteers, and community supporters proudly led the parade procession to the pride fair grounds in Shaw Millennium Park. We were also honoured to have Premier Alison Redford walk with Camp fYrefly in the parade. This was truly a historic event as Premier Redford became the first Premier in Alberta’s history to march in a pride parade.

9th Annual Mayor’s Pride Brunch in Support of Camp fYrefly
Held at the end of the Edmonton Pride Festival in June 2014, the brunch was our largest and most successful to date with over 450 people in attendance. This year’s brunch featured our new Mayor Don Iveson and a special birth certificate presentation to Wren Kauffman, making him the first minor in the province to have his birth certificate changed without the requirement of sex reassignment surgery. The brunch also featured a powerful story and musical performance from Camp fYrefly participant Marissa Taylor. Marrisa’s story was featured by the University of Alberta in its new Cornerstone philanthropic magazine, which can be viewed at: http://www.cornerstonemagazine.ca/marissa-taylor/

9th Annual Camp fYrefly Wine Tasting & Silent Auction Gala
The 2014 Gala was another fantastic “friend-raising” event. Guests experienced the power of a community coming together to support SGM youth. This year’s Gala highlighted an amazing selection of wines from our longtime sponsor deVine Wines & Spirits; wonderful tapas from our new partner A Cappella Catering; beautiful floral arrangements from FaBLOOMosity, a spectacular room design from Site 6 Event Design and Visual Solutions, colourful linens from Elegant Touches, and a unique venue at the Matrix Hotel. All of these presenting sponsors donated their time, talents, and services to support Camp fYrefly. Our silent auction had over 50 auction packages and 4 live auction items, including a private lunch with Mayor Don Iveson and Sarah Chan. Overall, more than 80 individual, corporate, and private donors made contributions to support the 2014 Camp fYrefly gala. A full list of these supporters can be found on our Camp fYrefly website.

Premier’s Pride Brunch in Support of Camp fYrefly
Premier Alison Redford hosted a very special brunch in support of Camp fYrefly on August 31st at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Calgary. This inaugural event featured about 200 guests and was moderated by Kelsey McEwen of CTV Calgary. The brunch program included greetings and remarks from Dr. Fern Snart, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta; The Hessel Family (fYrefly alumfly Elise and her family); Pam Krause, CEO, Calgary Sexual Health Centre; and included a wonderful musical performance by Mason Jenkins (Camp fYrefly Edmonton and Calgary Youth Leader). Hon. Alison Redford provided video greetings and
closing remarks were provided by Deputy Premier Thomas Lukaszuk. This was a very successful inaugural event, which we hope to continue next year.

**fYrefly in Schools**

fYrefly in Schools is an iSMSS-developed educational initiative designed to help reduce discrimination against SGM youth, increase awareness of the impacts of homo/bi/transphobia, build capacity for allied behavior, and create safe and inclusive school environments for all students. Geared towards junior high and high school students, fYrefly in Schools workshops are facilitated by an experienced educator and a youth peer-education team. Sessions are 40 – 80 minutes in length and delivered free to schools on a request basis. fYrefly in Schools sessions are offered in both Edmonton and Calgary.

Through a series of student-centered activities, fYrefly in Schools workshops are designed to increase students’ understanding of LGBTQ terminology, engage with common assumptions and stereotypes, and address some of the unique safety, health, and educational challenges that sexual and gender minorities face in schools. Specifically, these sessions provide participants with a safe learning environment to reflect upon the impacts of homophobic and transphobic language and bullying. Students are encouraged to be proactive, and to construct positive and productive ways to become allies and reduce discrimination and harassment of SGM youth as well as those perceived to be LGBTQ by their peers.

A key component of all fYrefly in Schools presentations is providing students with the opportunity to hear firsthand from a panel of peers who are SGM persons, self-identified allies who support sexual and gender minorities, and/or youth that have a family member who identifies as non-heterosexual. Along with providing a safe place for students to ask age-appropriate questions, the program’s activities enable students to learn from their peers about 1) the coming out experience and processes of self and familial acceptance; 2) consequences of homo/bi/transphobic bullying and guidelines to promote safety and wellbeing; and 3) positive aspects about “being who you are” in the world and the importance of recognizing diversity and difference as fundamental aspects of our society.

**Edmonton and Calgary Program Statistics: Outputs from January 2013 – December 2013**

Given unexpected program demand, one significant achievement was providing 155 presentations, which far exceeded our goal of reaching 100 classrooms.

- Students engaged: 4036 plus the educators in each classroom
- Volunteers time contributed to program: 720 hours
- Volunteer youth panelist trained: 88
- Total number of workshops delivered: 155 (including 66 in Calgary)

**Teacher Feedback:**

- “I think that if anything they gain empathy and recognize how assumptions are so wrong and hurtful.”
- “The panel stories had impact and the Assumptions Game was eye-opening.”
- “Loved the presentation.”
“I believe it should be mandatory.”
“Our students are open and accepting however, giving them information to help them communicate and support the community is beneficial.”
“I believe it is a valuable source of information and a good wake-up call to students/people who believe LGBTQ issues aren’t their problem.”
“Yes, I would recommend this presentation to other teachers and classes because it shares a strong message about knowing who you are and recognizing the differences in each other!”

Our youth panelists have also shown wonderful growth over the course of their participation in fYrefly in Schools. All panelists received a full day of instruction, leadership training and public speaking practice, but it is the confidence in the classroom that is remarkable to witness. These youth panelists truly transformed into educational leaders for their peers. Below are a few comments from some of our youth panelists reflecting on their experience participating in the fYrefly in Schools program:

“The program was amazing – I felt proud to be a part of it. […] I always seem to leave fYrefly in Schools presentations super excited and positive. fYrefly in Schools is AWESOME. I tell everyone I know about it and I am so honoured to be a part of something that will change the perspectives of our future society.”

“Thank you so much for helping me find my way to what I want to do in life and who I want to be […] Working with you on fYrefly in schools has been amazing and I already miss it. When I first started I was so nervous and now I don’t even need notes. Thank you again for providing so many opportunities for me to grow.”

The Family Resilience Project
The Family Resilience Project focuses on providing evidence-informed professional supports for SGM children, youth (under 25 years old), families (variously constructed), and community agencies in the Edmonton region. The following supports and services were offered over the past year:

- **Individual and Family Counselling:** Short-term, solution-focused counselling is provided for SGM children, youth, and their constructions of family. Referrals are accepted from school social workers, counsellors, family therapists, physicians, teachers, caseworkers, and parents as well as self-referrals from youth.
- **PFLAG Support Group:** This support group runs the last Wednesday of each month at the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services. The group is designed to support parents, guardians, caregivers, friends, and loved ones in the lives of SGM youth.
- **Trans and Gender Questioning Youth Support Group:** This group runs the last Tuesday of the month at the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies & Services. The group is designed to support trans and gender questioning youth 16 - 25 years old.
- **Professional Development:** iSMSS provides evidence-informed presentations and case consultations primarily for Region 6 agencies with Alberta Children and Youth Services
to help staff build professional capacity to support the comprehensive health (including physical, sexual, and mental health), individual development, safety, and socialization needs of sexual and gender minority youth in their caseload.

**Key Achievements of the Family Resilience Project: January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013**

- **Program Outputs**
  - Intakes = 83
  - Closed Files = 37
  - Average duration of service = 5.3 months
  - Average # of sessions = 8.3
  - Number of Volunteers = 3
  - Average # of participants for PFLAG = 16.5
  - Average # of participants for Trans = 6.5
  - Total # of hours in counseling sessions = 627 hours

- **Referrals/intakes/consultation phone calls** have come from 126+ different professionals, which include some of the following individuals and organizations:
  - AHS – Northgate Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
  - AHS – Peace River
  - Amiskwaciy Academy Teacher/Counsellor
  - Athabasca Edwin Parr Comp
  - Caregiver Recruitment Outreach Coordinator (Region 6)
  - Calgary Sexual Health Centre
  - Children’s Advocate Edmonton
  - Chimo Youth Retreat Centre – Youth Worker
  - Consultant for School District – Ontario
  - Covenant Health – Edmonton General Hospital
  - Drumheller – Mental Health Therapist
  - Edmonton General Hospital
  - Edmonton Public Schools – Counselors
  - Edmonton Public Schools – Sexual and Gender Minority Consultant
  - Edwin Parr Comp Athabasca – Counselor
  - Gender Identity Clinic, Grey Nuns Hospital
  - Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital – Psychologists & Social Workers
  - Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital – Effective Disordered Clinic
  - Grant McEwan – Social Work Program
  - Grant McEwan – Counsellor
  - Grey Nuns – Clinical Nurse Therapist
  - Lloydminster – Psychologist in Private Practice
  - McBride Career Group
  - McEwan University – Social Work Program
  - McEwan University – Counsellor
  - McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association
  - Mental Health Coordinator
  - Morinville High School – Counselor
o Mountain Plains Family Service Society of Edmonton
o On Tracks Consulting
o Parkland School Division
o Parkview School Nurse
o Partners for Kids & Youth
o PCHAD Outpatient Counsellor, Youth Addictions Treatment
o Persons with Developmental Disabilities – Service Coordinator Edmonton
o PFLAG inquiries
o Psychiatrist at Grey Nuns & Misericordia (Dr. Warneke and Dr. Petryk)
o Region 6 Caseworkers
o Region 6 Caregiver Recruitment Outreach Coordinator
o Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton
o Sherwood Park Primary Care Network – Mental Health Clinician
o St. Albert - Mental Health Clinic (Child & Adolescent Therapist)
o The Family Centre – Youth Capacity Builders
o The Family Centre – Family Intervention Program
o The Family Centre – Therapist
o The Pride Centre of Edmonton
o Trans & Gender Questioning Group inquiries
o Yellowhead Youth Centre
o YESS - youth worker from Armoury Resource Centre
o University of Alberta – Clinical Services
o University of Alberta – Mental Health Centre
o Numerous self referrals – consultations – resource linking

Trans & Gender Questioning Peer-to-Peer Led Group Attendance
  ▪ Average attendance = 6.5 participants

PFLAG Group Attendance
  ▪ Average attendance = 16.5 participants

Community and Region 6 Presentations
  ▪ Community
    o Human Ecology, University of Alberta – March 4, 2013
    o Grant McEwan University – Social Work Program – March 13, 2013
    o Cultural Counselling Class, University of Alberta – April 5, 2013
    o On Tracks Consulting – September 20, 2013
    o United Way – October 4, 2013
    o Alberta Health Services – OT Conference – October 18, 2013
    o Consultation & Collaboration EDPY 456, University of Alberta – October 23, 13
    o McMan Family Intervention Program – October 30, 2013
    o Grant McEwan University – Social Work Methods Class – November 5, 2013
    o Educational Psychology, University of Alberta – November 18, 2012
    o Correctional Services Canada – EAP Referral Agents – November 19, 2013

  ▪ Region 6
Project Trends
- Trans-identified/gender minority clients continue to comprise a higher caseload than what was originally expected.
- Main presenting concerns for youth are anxiety, depression, bullying, self-harm and suicidal ideation.
- The power of group support is evident as it helps to decrease isolation and participants can relate to one another.
- There has been an increase in demand for professional development workshops on sexual and gender identity issues from professionals and service providers in the Edmonton and surrounding area.

Family Resilience Project Success Story
Sue (18 years old; pseudonym) was referred to our program by her school counselor. This counselor was concerned for Sue and had recently noticed that she had been dressing like a male. There were family tensions and therefore Sue had been forced to reside with her maternal aunt. Sue’s counselor graciously agreed to accompany Sue to her first session, since Sue felt extremely anxious about the whole process. Once in the counseling room with the iSMSS Registered Psychologist and her school counselor, it became glaringly evident that Sue was panicking (ex. she was uncontrollably laughing, fidgeting, and experiencing shortness of breath.) She self-assessed her anxiety as a 10 out of 10. This initial session was complicated, since we were entirely focused on providing a safe space for Sue to self-regulate and ground herself while in the room.

The second session was almost a mirror image of the first, whereby Sue’s anxiety was once again the focus (decreasing her panic and anxiety). We made slight progress throughout the next few sessions. The psychologist was able to learn more about Sue’s family, her education experience, her interests, and most importantly (according to Sue) her fear of her parents finding out that she was attending sessions at iSMSS. It took many sessions until her anxiety began to decrease. Sue continually stated that she was “just trying to stay alive and that she was so stressed out.” It was as if she was attempting to inform the psychologist of something, but it seemed as though she was unable to vocalize her reasons for seeking counselling. She seemed stuck in her words and unable to vocalize them out loud.

Sue and the counselor continued to spend time together assessing her anxiety, as well as suicidal ideation. The psychologist focused on the importance of Sue seeing her family physician, yet when discussing this topic, Sue’s avoidance seemed steadfast. On the 6th counseling session, Sue finally admitted she has always felt like a boy and stated, “this has always been a problem.” The next few sessions were spent focusing on Sue’s disclosure and goals in relation to her potential transition. In these conversations, Sue focused on endless potential barriers and obstacles (ex. cutting her hair short) and this once again increased her anxiety and paranoia that her family would find out her true identity. In order to keep Sue’s anxiety at bay and still work on her self-acceptance, the psychologist provided Sue with information and educational material (reading) pertaining to “What it's like to be Trans.”
would spend endless hours researching and reading at the Institute resource room, since she did not feel she could take material home in fear of her parents and family finding it.

In the next few sessions Sue and the counsellor discussed her goals, her dysphoria, the gender clinic referral and process, and what it truly meant for her to identify as a male. Up until this point, Sue continued to use her birth name and female pronouns. During the 10th counseling session, Sue finally decided she wanted to be acknowledged as a male, use male pronouns and chose a male name (Sam). From this moment on, it seemed as though more momentum was being gained with each session. Sam agreed to for the psychologist to send a referral over to the Gender Clinic at the Grey Nuns and he also agreed to see a new physician since he expressed feeling uncomfortable with his previous one. This new physician was incredibly safe and supportive of Sam. Sam was diagnosed by his physician with anxiety and was prescribed medication in order to manage his physical symptoms (allowing him to self-regulate). Sam enrolled in university and is in the process of acquiring part-time work. One of the most significant indicators of his success involved his hair cut. Sam wanted his hair short for 10+ years, yet his parents never agree. The day Sam arrived at a session with his hair cut short, was the day the psychologist knew that he felt empowered and capable of making his own decisions.

At the closure of counseling, clients are asked to fill out evaluations on the service they have received. Sam wrote: “This counseling experience has helped me in more ways than I could imagine. One thing that really stands out for me about this counseling experience is the incredible amount of patience that has been shown towards me. I think it’s safe for me to say that there are only a small handful of people who have the patience to deal with and put up with my severe anxiety issues. I’m very thankful that I was not kicked out for taking nearly two months before I felt safe enough to discuss the primary reason why I came to counseling. Through the guidance I have received, I was able to directly deal with my personal issues for the first time in my life. Without this, I likely would have never been able to deal with and manage my trans problems in an effective way. The most important thing I have gained from this experience is the freedom to live life and get through each day.”

2nd Annual Provincial Gay-Straight Alliance Conference
iSMSS hosted the Second Annual Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Conference in November 2013 at the University of Calgary in partnership with the Calgary Sexual Health Centre and the Weklund School of Education. This year’s GSA conference more than doubled in size with over 150 students, GSA advisors, teachers, school administrators, and school trustees in attendance. Students, supervisors and community supporters attended sessions on creating and sustaining GSAs, youth leadership and advocacy, overcoming bullying and stigma, using drama and music for social change, making healthy decisions, and how to become a human rights ally.

Many of the students and teachers at the conference came from schools with GSAs, while others were seeking resources to help set up new GSA clubs. Buses brought participants from across Alberta with strong representation from Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, and even Saskatoon for the full-day event.

The conference was opened by Dr. Kristopher Wells and Dr. Dennis Sumara, Dean of the Werklund School of Education, and featured welcoming greetings from Hon. Sandra Jansen, Associate Minister of Family and Community Safety, and Pam Krause, CEO of the Calgary Sexual Health Centre.
Vancouver-based educator and musician Kate Reid served as the conference keynote performer, and led workshops focusing on using the arts as a form of expression. Dianne Roulson, advisor for diversity, equity and inclusion in the Office of the Chief Superintendent, also brought greetings from the Calgary Board of Education and MLA Calgary-Buffalo Kent Hehr attended afternoon sessions and helped close the event.