



Strategic Plan

2008-2011

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Introduction

October 2007

Over the past year, the Ten Oaks Project began to acknowledge that the organization's momentum and growth were surpassing the plan it had set out to achieve by 2009. This growth served as the catalyst for embarking on a strategic planning process that engaged the community to join us in reflecting, imagining and planning our direction for the next three years.

Through a community-wide consultation, we struck out to seek insight and direction from the organization's core stakeholders: campers, families, community partners, volunteers and supporters. Their feedback led us to develop a three-year strategic plan that reinforces our commitment to maintaining Camp Ten Oaks as the organization's principal program, while invigorating thoughts about approaches to delivering new programming. With the overarching intent to promote sustainability, this plan aims to transition the Ten Oaks Project to a staff-managed organization while simultaneously increasing community and volunteer engagement in the work we do.

The strategic planning process also set in motion an exploration of our mission, vision and values. Re-written and adapted to correspond to our renewed strategic direction, we are pleased to publicly present them for the first time in this document.

This exercise was one that highlighted the opportunities available to us, but also our limitations. There are more needs in our communities than we are able to fulfill – either because these needs are not in line with our mandate or we don't feel we can meet them with the quality of programming we would want to deliver. The community indicated that there is a demonstrated need for advocacy in schools, and while the Ten Oaks Project is committed to creating safer spaces for children and youth of LGBTQ communities, we will continue to do so only through programs rooted in play rather than in advocacy.

It is within this framework that we set out on the journey from a volunteer-driven organization to one that has stable, long-term financial support and sustainability. Within the next three years, we strive to continue to progress towards the incredibly high standard that we have set for ourselves while focusing on breaking down barriers, enhancing self-esteem, building leadership and self-confidence for the children and youth of the LGBTQ community.

Ten Oaks Project
Board of Directors
Holly Wagg · Mark Schaan · Sonja Prakash · Andrea Poncia · Larisa Williams
Nancy McKelvey · Jen Keystone · Aimee Bruner · Salina Eldon · Wendy Barber

Mission, Vision and Values

Our Mission

The Ten Oaks Project engages and connects children and youth from LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, queer) communities through programs and activities rooted in play.

Our Vision

The Ten Oaks Project is a leader in meeting the needs of children and youth in LGBTQ families and LGBTQ youth. Our work is inspired by camp and grounded in social justice as we strive to create safer spaces and grow positive peer networks for all children and youth.

Our Values

Empowerment Through Play

What we do is fun - and, lots of it! Our work is grounded in asset-based philosophies that use play to effect personal change, enhance self-esteem, develop leadership and foster independence. We believe that by bringing children and youth together to play and engage in recreation, we can build their confidence, forge bonds and facilitate understanding.

Learning by Doing

We believe that the best way to understand how the world works, and how to change it, is to engage in it. To facilitate this we ensure our programs are rooted in experiential education, or hands-on learning, that inspires active engagement, piques curiosity, and creates spaces where questions can be asked, investigations conducted, successes celebrated and mistakes learned from.

Social Justice

We strive to make the world more fair, push to see society value all people more, and try to better understand and respect our environment. By critically reflecting upon the way in which human rights are manifested in the everyday lives of people, we are challenged to provide equitable opportunities and representation in a real and substantive way. Our commitment to economic accessibility and respect for the diverse voices in our communities flows from this goal.

Collaboration and Innovation

We do things a bit differently. Forging relationships that are strong and collaborative is at the heart of what we do. The communities we serve are engaged in every aspect of what we do. We strive to evolve by adapting and adding our flavour to existing best practices. What we do, we want to do well, and we recognize that the way to do that is to build on the strengths of our community.

People

Fundamentally, we are an organization that is built around people - their hopes, their abilities, and their uniqueness. We understand children and youth as persons in their own right and aim to provide experiences that develop, support and empower them. The organization, as its core, is motivated by the needs of children and youth with LGBTQ parent(s) and LGBTQ youth. Moreover, we are an organization built on the strength of our community and we would not exist without the valuable contributions of our volunteers, staff, directorate, sponsors, donors and community partners.

Our History and Milestones

In April 2004, Holly Wagg and Julia Alarie co-founded the Ten Oaks Project in response to the lack of services for the children and youth of the LGBTQ community in Ottawa. The distribution of a needs assessment survey between April and August 2004 to assess the feasibility of a summer camp program showed that an overwhelming 81.6% of survey respondents supported the concept of this initiative. Eleven months of fundraising, planning and development resulted in a one-week summer camp, the first of its kind in Canada, in August 2005.

Since then, Camp Ten Oaks has had three successful years of camp where we have provided fun, engaging and well-rounded camp-flavoured programming for the children and youth of the LGBTQ community. We have built on our successes by developing new programs, shared our learning at conferences and community events, and facilitated a second strategic planning process to take us into the next three years.

Brandin

April 2004	Julia Alarie and Holly Wagg co-found the Ten Oaks Project
September 2004	Inaugural Board of Directors is put in place, which includes Sonja Prakash, Jen Keystone, Elpis Law, Julia Alarie and Holly Wagg, and begin to establish a strategic direction for the organization
September 2004	Ten Oaks Project partners with Mountain Meadow, a Philadelphia-based organization that has offered a summer camp program to children and youth of LGBTQ families since 1991
October 2004	Ten Oaks Project partners with Family Services Ottawa and Centretown Community Centre to deliver Rainbow Families, a group for children of GLBTQ families and their parents
September 2005	Rainbow Families takes off for 2005-2006 with an emphasis on the children's program and two new facilitators
January 2005	Ten Oaks Project makes a presentation to Ottawa City Council on the needs of children of LGBTQ families
February 2005	Announcement that Camp Ten Oaks will take place August 21-27, 2005 near Wakefield, Quebec
March 2005	The Ten Oaks Project is granted charitable status and raises over \$4,500 at its first annual camp Bowl-A-Thon

Our History and Milestones, continued

August 2005	Camp Ten Oaks takes place and is attended by 22 campers
February 2006	A new leadership program for campers ages 16-17 is announced as part of the Camp Ten Oaks program
March 2006	Over \$14,400 is raised at the second annual camp Bowl-A-Thon by more than 20 teams
August 2006	Camp Ten Oaks took place the week of August 20-26 and is attended by 40 campers
March 2007	Over \$18,000 is raised at the third annual camp Bowl-A-Thon by more than 25 teams
April 2007	Delivered a plenary session entitled "That's so Gay!" - Speaking Out About Homophobic Bullying and Harassment" at I Am Safe, the third international CAYFO conference on bullying and victimization
August 2007	Camp Ten Oaks took place the week of August 19-25 and is attended by 45 campers

Strategic Priorities

#1

Strengthen organizational infrastructure and capacity to support the transition from a volunteer-driven to a staff-managed organization

The Ten Oaks Project will build its administrative assets by increasing human resources capacity while fostering volunteer involvement at all levels of the organization. Over the next three years, the organization will expand its organizational policies and procedures to encompass all operating areas and to secure infrastructure that will allow us to support organizational growth.

#2

Maintain an engaged, effective and informed Board of Directors whose value-driven governance and leadership will help the organization achieve its mission and vision

The Ten Oaks Project is led by a working Board of Directors. Our hands-on team is guided by, and informs, the organization's mission and values in all of its efforts. With an eye to the future sustainability of the organization, the Board will work to document and solidify all aspects of organizational operations preparing to hand the organization off to the next generation of leaders.

#3

Increase visibility and awareness of the Ten Oaks Project through outreach and awareness activities

Throughout the consultation process, the community repeatedly identified a need to increase awareness about the Ten Oaks Project and the issues that impact upon the lives of children and youth of LGBTQ communities. With this in mind, the organization will undertake to have a greater presence and to enhance our communications strategies while exploring outreach opportunities and partnerships that will allow us to raise the profile of the work we do.

#4

Maintain Camp Ten Oaks as the principal program of Ten Oaks Project

The Ten Oaks Project was created to develop and deliver a summer camp for the children and youth of LGBTQ families. In the next three years, we will harness the momentum of Camp Ten Oaks by developing and implementing a succession strategy to ensure sustainability of operations into the future. While we intend to explore future opportunities to expand Camp Ten Oaks, our aim in the short-term is to moderate growth, so as to set a sound foundation to expand upon in the future.

#5

Explore other program opportunities for our target groups in the National Capital Region

By undertaking an environmental scan of the current programs and services that are related to the children and youth of the LGBTQ community, we will determine which new programs are needed and develop partnerships and collaborative relationships as required to deliver these new programs and services.

Strategic Priority #1

Strengthen organizational infrastructure and capacity to support the transition from a volunteer-driven to a staff-managed organization	
Functions	Objectives
Volunteers and Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract and retain qualified volunteer, paid staff and contractors for all programs and activities • Further develop written organizational policies and procedures to encompass all operating areas • Assess current volunteer program • Identify opportunities and engage volunteers in the work we do
Resource Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a multi-year financial plan that relies upon diverse funding sources to assure stable long-term financial support for the organization and its programs
Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the capacity of the organization to produce timely budgets and financial reports for the organization and its programs • Identify and hire an auditor to produce an annual audited review
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure permanent, shared office space • Identify and purchase software and hardware to support the organization's operations

Strategic Priority #2

Maintain an engaged, effective and informed Board of Directors whose value-driven governance and leadership will help the organization achieve its mission and vision

Functions	Objectives
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a succession strategy for the Board to ensure continuity and sustainability of operations • Develop an operations manual for each portfolio and implement mechanisms to facilitate the transition of portfolios to incoming Board members • Continue to evaluate the performance of the Board of Directors at six-month intervals • Maintain the Board's level of engagement in short and long-term strategic planning, as well as in the development of annual operating plans • Evaluate the current governance model annually and evolve accordingly

Strategic Priority #3

Increase the visibility and awareness of the Ten Oaks Project and the programs it offers	
Functions	Objectives
Communications and Media Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and develop a communications strategy and marketing plan • Assess and update current communications tools • Develop new communications tools and mechanisms as required • Develop an integrated camp and alumni communications program to maintain parent, guardian, camper, staff and past-volunteer interest in the work of the organization • Increase presence of Ten Oaks Project and its programs in local media sources • Raise profile of issues related to children of LGBTQ communities within the LGBTQ and larger communities
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore outreach opportunities, develop and implement an outreach strategy to increase community presence and involvement • Explore engagement opportunities and models to increase participation in the organization and its work

Strategic Priority #4

Maintain Camp Ten Oaks as the principal program of Ten Oaks Project	
Functions	Objectives
Camp Ten Oaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a succession strategy for camp to ensure continuity and sustainability of operations • Review camp governance and operations model • Increase the number of spaces available for campers under a moderate growth model while maintaining a minimum 1:3 staff/camper ratio • Strengthen our capacity to recruit, retain and engage a diverse group of skilled volunteers to work at camp each summer • Explore growth and expansion opportunities for Camp Ten Oaks and our programming model • Document the camp model and our methods of program delivery • Annually identify operational priorities to ensure program and program delivery remains aligned with industry best-practices and positions our program model as a recognized leader • Review logic model and annual evaluation plan

Strategic Priority # 5

Explore other program opportunities for our target groups in the National Capital Region	
Functions	Objectives
Program Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake an environmental scan of current programs and services that are related to target communities• Build upon information gathered from community consultation to determine which new programs or services are needed and if our organization is best positioned to deliver these• Develop partnerships and collaborative relationships as required to deliver new programs and services• Offer to share the skills and expertise we have developed to date with community partners who are looking to expand or offer new services to our community