

<<life line>>

Newsletter of

**LESBIAN GAY BI TRANS
YOUTHLINE**

Spring/Summer 2008

Windows Messenger

File Actions Tools Help

Youth Line, Online

[Click here to sign in](#) by Tamara Lynn Robert

The Youth Line will soon launch its newest facet of peer support services via online instant messaging.

Sometimes a question or a thought is too private to say out loud, even anonymously through a confidential phone line. Typing, on the other hand, somehow allows it to remain in that realm of inside thoughts. Sharing those thoughts via instant messaging, in text format, can help a service user tease out what they are thinking or feeling while receiving instant support from our volunteers.


Additionally, it allows more privacy for youth who can access a computer quietly who would otherwise have a parent, a guardian or roommates nearby who might hear a telephone conversation. It may give service users the ability to take smaller steps until they are ready to hear and share their thoughts out loud.

Instant messaging has many benefits for the work we do at the Youth Line. Beyond adopting a prominent form of communication found in youth culture, other benefits to using instant messaging include volunteers being able to receive guidance without fracturing conversations, increased ease in providing referrals to services and resources by sending links to websites that can be automatically accessed, all while providing support in an atmosphere that feels more anonymous to service users.

Our training curriculum will now encompass a module to effectively prepare volunteers for this new endeavour. They will be given the opportunity to build the skills they need to use instant messaging and overcome some of the barriers that exist with online communication.

We are excited to increase our accessibility with a tool that is a part of every day communications for so many youth. Whether by phone, e-mail or instant messaging, the Youth Line will be here to answer the "call".

Instant Messaging will be available starting June 2, 2008. To add us as a contact, please send an email to askus@youthline.ca.



WHAT'S INSIDE...

School Safety: The Right of Youth and the Responsibility of Adults

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Youth Line @ the AGO

10th Annual Youth Line Community Youth Awards

...and more!!

Greetings from our new Executive Director



It is my great pleasure to introduce myself to you, our friends, allies, members and supporters. I joined the Youth Line team in October of 2007 and it has been an incredible six months so far! We've said goodbye to many of our longtime staff and champions in the past year, and we've welcomed many new folks to the

Youth Line community. I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of those who have moved on to other opportunities and to tell you a bit about our reconfigured team:

Our community of youth peer support volunteers is always welcoming new members and finding ways to stay in touch with those who have reached the ripe old age of... 27.

Our Board of Directors has said goodbye to many long-term champions: Marlene Ham, Nik Redman, Arthur Lam, Chris McGrath, Corinne Alstrom and Jamy Li. Our returning Board of Directors members Michael Erickson (Co-Chair), Sherri Manko, (Co-Chair), Brandon Sawh (Secretary) and Luke Costello join me in welcoming new members: Michael Bach, Josh Mackinnon, Ayden Scheim, Nikki Stratigacos, Donna Turner (Treasurer) and Sujith Xavier.

Our Staff team wishes a fond farewell to: Phil Wong (Executive Director 2003-2007); Karl Neilsen (Service Coordinator 2005-2007); Akhaji Zakiya (Financial Administrator 2006-2007); charysse robinson (Outreach, Service Coordinator, Interim Executive Director 2005-2007); Cristina Murano (Service Coordinator 2007-2008).

We've welcomed new staff with open arms and a revitalized sense of purpose and commitment. We've used this time of transition to re-think who does what, and how to provide the best services to the most youth. I'm proud to introduce you to our team: Jennifer Fodden (Executive Director); vashti persad (Development and Communications

Coordinator) *new role in 2007; Tamara Lynn Robert (Service Coordinator); Brian de Matos (Shift Supervisor)* new role; Matthew Chin (Outreach Coordinator)* new role.

Despite so many comings and goings one might be surprised to discover how much is happening at Youth Line that's new and exciting. As you've read, we are meeting youth where they are at and want to chat, so we're introducing online peer support through Instant Messaging. Now there are more ways for youth to get connected for support. Our website will be getting a refresh this year, and while we're at it we'll be introducing new features like: a provincial calendar of LGBTTIQ2 youth events; more information about how to get involved at the Youth Line; and more information for our donors.

Additionally, we are deepening our ability to respond to the experiences of homophobia and transphobia, harassment, bullying, abuse and hate crimes our service users tell us about. Our new and improved website will feature a section about these issues so that youth will have access to more information and support. And we are building an online homophobic hate crimes reporting tool. Youth who choose to report their experiences will have an anonymous tool to communicate with police services anywhere in Ontario.

This is an important year for the Youth Line, as we plan for the future. We want to know what our communities want from and for us and will be developing a variety of ways to participate in our Strategic Planning for the Future process in the autumn. Please watch for details about how to get involved to have your ideas heard!

Enjoy reading up on our Youth Line news, and please don't be shy – if we haven't met yet, drop me a line to introduce yourself!

Jennifer Fodden, M.Ed. Couns. Psych.
Executive Director
info@youthline.ca

our staff



(from left to right): Brian de Matos; vashti persad; Jennifer Fodden; Tamara Lynn Robert; Matthew Chin



I'm going to try to listen carefully & not to judge you & to understand where I can & to never tell you what to do & I don't know everything but someone somewhere has the answer you're looking for and I'll try to find them & so ask away but mostly I'm just here to talk & I hope you're ready to

Some times people say:

thank you & that is so nice.



CALLS :

COME IN MANY FLAVOURS.



artwork by Tessa

SOME QUESTIONS ARE HARD TO ASK

YOU ARE NOT ALONE



The Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line is a proud co-beneficiary of the 2008 Pride and Remembrance Run.

Register **NOW** and support LGBTQ youth.



design: jonathan kitchen | angusandamie.com

The Pride and Remembrance Run is a 5km fundraising run/walk organized and operated by the philanthropic and athletic-oriented Pride and Remembrance Association.

The Pride and Remembrance Association (PRA) is a leading not for profit volunteer-run organization established in 1996 dedicated to supporting Toronto's lesbian and gay community. The Pride and Remembrance Run is the only annual athletic event during Toronto's Pride Week, promoting and fostering community spirit, goodwill, volunteerism and sportsmanship in the Canadian lesbian and gay community.

As a beneficiary of this year's run, The Pride and Remembrance Association support will go towards the Youth Line's 2008 Outreach Initiative to Ontario's youth-related agencies such as community centres, libraries and schools.

The funding will assist our staff and volunteers to provide outreach materials to more than 2,000 agencies.

Along with producing traditional outreach materials, the Youth Line will further develop our website, as well as overall web presence, as a means of effectively reaching youth across the province.

This year's Pride and Remembrance Run takes place on Saturday, June 28. Registration is now open!!! Join Team Youth Line at priderun.org or email info@youthline.ca to find out how you can join Team Youth Line for this year's Pride and Remembrance Run or pledge your support!!!

WWW.PRIDERUN.ORG



LESBIAN GAY BI TRANS
YOUTHLINE
1.800.268.YOUTH
416.962.YOUTH
youthline.ca

THE LESBIAN GAY BI TRANS YOUTH LINE
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PROUDLY PRESENT

10TH ANNUAL COMMUNITY
YOUTH AWARDS GALA

CELEBRATING THE EXCEPTIONAL
AND SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS
OF LGBTQ YOUTH ACROSS ONTARIO

**THURSDAY
JUNE 5/08**



Bright Pearl Restaurant
348 Spadina Ave
6pm - Dinner / 7pm - Ceremony

WITH HOST DEB PEARCE

For table and award sponsorship opportunities,
please contact [vashti.persad](mailto:vashti.persad@youthline.ca) at 416.962.2232 ext 223
or donate@youthline.ca

ASL interpretation will be provided and the venue is barrier free

PRESENTING SPONSOR



ONTARIO RAINBOW HEALTH RESOURCE GROUP
GEORGE SMITHERMAN, MPP, TORONTO CENTRE
ADAM GIAMBRONE, CITY COUNCILLOR WARD 18

Design: Jonathan Kitchen, jakcreative.com

This year the Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line is pleased to announce that we will be partnering with the Art Gallery of Ontario for our Youth Line Art Auction fundraiser in early winter 2008!!

With breathtaking new art, a spectacular new building and revealing new ideas, the transformed AGO will be a pre-eminent art museum and an international cultural tourism destination.

For more information, to get updates or become involved, please contact us at 416.962.2232 ext 223 or donate@youthline.ca

YES! I believe that LGBTQ youth in Ontario need the **Youth Line**.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS _____ UNIT _____

CITY _____ P. CODE _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

I would like to make a **ONE TIME** donation by my Credit Card

I would like to make an **ON-GOING MONTHLY** donation by my Credit Card

VISA MASTERCARD EXP ____/____

CARD NUMBER _____

SIGNATURE _____

NAME ON CARD _____

I would like to make a donation in the amount of (Please circle):

\$20 \$50 \$100 \$250 OTHER: \$ _____

My cheque is enclosed.

Please make cheques payable to:
The Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line
P.O. Box 62, Station 'F' - Toronto, ON M4Y 2L4

Please send me 5 information pamphlets that I will share with friends and colleagues

Donor information is confidential and never shared without the consent of the donor.

Yes, the Youth Line can recognize my donation in newsletters and annual reports

Future correspondence:

Mail Email Do Not Send Correspondence

Thank you for your support!

Registered Charitable Status Number:
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School Safety: The Right of Youth and Responsibility of Adults

by Lina Darwich & Shelley Hymel (University of British Columbia) and Terry Waterhouse (University College of the Fraser Valley)

Adolescence is a time of questioning one's identity and where one falls on the sexual spectrum (Williams, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2005). Regardless of whether adolescents are attracted to the same gender, the other gender, both genders, neither gender, or are unsure about their attractions, all adolescents share the basic need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Belonging is not merely about "fitting in" to one's community. Belonging entails a sense of safety and connectedness, which stem from being valued by a community which the adolescent her/himself values (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). One such community is high school where youth spend the larger part of four years interacting mostly with their peers and teachers from the larger community.

Peer acceptance within the school context has been positively linked to youths' sense of belonging (Osterman 2000), whereas peer rejection has been linked to several negative consequences, one of which is diminished school attendance and school dropout (McDougall, Hymel, Vaillancourt, & Mercer, 2001). To date, research on the school experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning (LGBTQ) youth have predominantly focused on peer rejection and other negative peer experiences. Consistent with this research, our survey of Canadian secondary students (Darwich, Hymel, & Waterhouse, 2008) showed that, relative to straight youth, students who identified as LGBQ youth reported more skipping school, more victimization regarding their sexual orientation, and less belonging at school, with lesbian/gay and bisexual youth reporting the most negative and least positive experiences.

Although such research has raised awareness about the negative consequences of homophobia and heterosexism, experts in the field have called for a focus on the positive side, on what is working for LGBTQ youth in schools. For example, one US study showed that having Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) in schools was positively associated with LGBQ youth feeling a greater sense of safety in schools (the study did not include trans and questioning youth). Also, the youth who perceived that they had a school staff member who they could talk to about a problem were almost one third less likely to report being threatened or injured than LGBQ youth without adult support at school (Goednow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006). Thus, supportive adults in high school can play an important role in promoting the sense of safety among LGBTQ youth, who like all youth, have a basic right to education and to safety.


The purpose of the study briefly described below was to examine the sense of school safety of LGBQ youth in a Canadian context and how this related to their perceptions of

having supportive adults in their secondary schools. Data were collected as part of a district-wide survey conducted by a large, ethnically and economically diverse urban school district in British Columbia. Of the youth who completed the survey, about 12% identified their sexual orientation as lesbian/gay (236), bisexual (592), or questioning (1426). Does adult support matter to these youth? Our findings showed that 68% of lesbian/gay youth who reported a lack of adult support at school never or almost never felt safe at school. Similarly, 50% of bisexual youth and 47% of unsure youth who reported lack of adult support at school reported never or almost never feeling safe. In contrast, 76% of lesbian/gay youth who perceived that adults at school were supportive reported feeling safe most or all of the time at school, as did 85% of bisexual and 82% of questioning youth.

These findings underscore the fact that adult support at school is a must because the safety of LGBTQ youth, like the safety of all youth, is a basic right. Although gender identity was not included in the study, the school district, in which the survey was conducted, has been actively committed to the safety and support of trans youth. For example, a month ago, a workshop on gender identity and trans student support was held for teachers, counselors, parents, and principals. The workshop provided information on gender identity, clinical care, and options for trans youth and discussed student support and inclusive teaching. Also, the district is providing all its school with various resources (a book and 2 recent films) about trans youth.

Undoubtedly, more collaborative research and action among the adults of the larger community are needed. The creation and sustainability of safe schools is the duty of all adults, who need to be proactive and committed, at every level of the community (Selberg, Schwartz, Santos, & Green, 2008, <http://www.independent.com/news/2008/feb/21/homophobia-our-schools>).

This article was a result of a PREVNet-Youth Line Collaboration. The authors wish to express their appreciation to the district staff and all the staff and students within the schools participating in this project and to the Edith Lando Foundation for its support for this.

	<p>PREVNet (Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence) is a network of 50 leading Canadian research scientists and 42 national organizations that work with children and youth, industry and government. Funded by the federal Networks of Centres of Excellence, PREVNet's mission is to stop bullying in Canada and to promote safe and healthy relationships for all Canadian children and youth. Please visit www.prevnet.ca for more information.</p>
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Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee (SLARC)

by Matthew Chin

It is always great for the Youth Line to be asked to speak to young people about the experiences of queer and trans youth while also raising awareness of its services. This is especially the case within communities in Ontario where sexuality and gender identity are not always talked about and where the Youth Line does not often have the opportunity to visit.

On Monday April 7th and Tuesday April 8th, as a settler and person who benefits from the past and continued colonization of Aboriginal people in Canada, I had the privilege of being able to visit Sioux Lookout, a small rural community located in north western Ontario near Manitoba, where roughly half of the inhabitants are Aboriginal people. I, along with Percy Lezard of the 2-Spirited People of the First Nations, were invited to this community by the Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee (SLARC) or ·ᐱᓄᓇ·ᐱᑲᑦ ᐱᑦᑲᓇ·ᐱᐱᑦᑲᑦ·ᐱᓄᓇᑦ ᑲᐱᓄᓇᐱᑦ·ᐱᑦ to take part in a Youth Hate Crimes Project, an initiative which aims to “provide victims of hate crimes... with the tools to understand what has happened and provide them with the tools to address the experience.”

The SLARC, our host, was very welcoming and hospitable and the organization put a great deal of effort into making sure that Percy's and my visit could take place and that we were able to engage youth in as many venues as possible.

During our trip, Percy and I visited the Sioux Lookout Youth Centre as well as the Queen Elizabeth District High School and the Pelican Falls First Nations High School. We delivered 5 workshops on the topic of homophobia and transphobia within the context of the historical and present colonization of Aboriginal people in Canada. Both Percy and I drew heavily from our personal experiences in discussing the issues raised in the workshops. Workshop topics included examining the historical and contemporary links between the

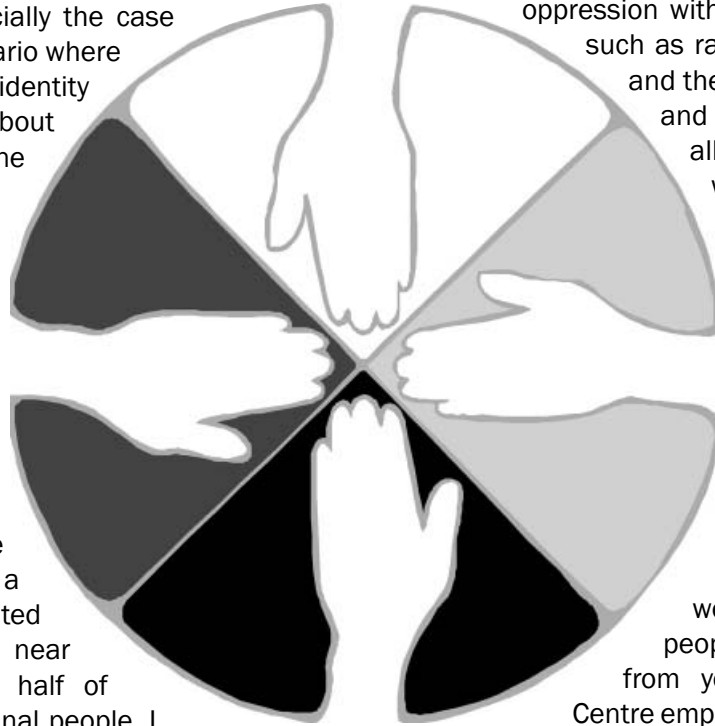
colonization of Aboriginal people and homophobia and transphobia within Aboriginal communities; the intersections of sexuality and gender-based oppression with other forms of oppression such as racism, sexism and classism; and the ways in which homophobia and transphobia hurts us all. Towards the end of the workshop sessions, I let the youth know about the Youth Line and left quite a few resources and Youth Line materials (posters, flyers, cards, magnets, buttons and flashlights) with the Sioux Lookout Youth Centre and both high schools.

In total, Percy and I delivered workshops to over 100 young people. The direct feedback from youth, teachers and Youth Centre employees in conversations after the workshops and in the evaluation forms submitted were positive and encouraging. On one evaluation form submitted, in response to the question, “What best did you like about the workshop?” one person wrote, “The subjects discussed and uncovering subjects that are normally kept in the dark.”

Hopefully, Percy's and my visit to Sioux Lookout will have encouraged greater dialogue around the diversity of experiences of sexuality and gender identity. The workshop evaluation forms indicated that some youth participating in the workshops had several questions that they did not voice as the workshops were happening. If these youth are not able to have their questions answered, hopefully they view the Youth Line as an accessible service and give us a call.

If you have any questions about this article or the Youth Line visit to Sioux Lookout, please contact Matthew Chin, Outreach Coordinator at 416-962-2232 Ext. 229 or at outreach@youthline.ca.

For more information about the Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee, please go to: www.slarc.ca.



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FRIENDS OF THE YOUTH LINE

Thank you to all of the individuals that donated to the Youth Line last year. With your support we expanded our promotional efforts, trained more volunteers and continued to provide this desperately needed service for our youth; youth who often just need to find out that they are not alone.

Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line
P.O. Box 62, Stn F Toronto, ON M4Y 2L4
t. 416.962.2232 t. 1.888.687.9688
f. 416.962.7967
www.youthline.ca

OUR PEOPLE

The Youth Line owes its existence to hundreds of dedicated volunteers that have answered the phones, organized events, licked envelopes and so much more. You know who you are and we hope you realize what a wonderful impact you have made.

Adanyi ♥ Alvi ♥ Amanda ♥ Ankur ♥
Brenna ♥ Brittany ♥ Chris ♥ Christelle ♥
Dana ♥ David ♥ Emily ♥ Fatema ♥ Fin ♥
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Julia ♥ Kay ♥ Leah ♥ Lynn ♥ Matt ♥
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Stephanie ♥ Stephen ♥ Suzanne ♥
Syrus ♥ Tessa ♥ Verlia ♥ Vincente
...and many many more!!

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outreach@youthline.ca

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vashti persad
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info@youthline.ca

