

MAXimizer projects description 2017-2022

(23 projects)

2017-2018 (Four projects)

01 KEEPING IT 100 (November to December 2017)

Keeping it 100 (K1) is an ACB (African, Caribbean, Black) GBTQ (gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning, DL, etc) peer discussion group.

We cover a wide range of rotating topics in a group led discussion. Our goal is to provide a safe and welcoming environment to talk about issues that affect ACB guys into guys. We accomplish this by supporting one another, increasing the representation of the Black, Queer male experience, and help inform others of the unique experiences and needs we have. We host guest speakers and hosts off-site sessions on occasion. It's always Free with Food and Refreshments provided.

Added to permanent MAX programming in February 2018

02 THE SAHRA (FEBRUARY – MARCH 2018)

The Sahra was a group of GBTQ guys into guys who identify as Middle Eastern who met weekly to watch a movie and had a discussion about the experiences of Middle Eastern guys in the GBT2Q world.

03 GAY MUSLIM COOKING NIGHT (January to February 2018)

MAX Ottawa and Gay Muslims United organized the Gay Muslims Communal Cooking night. Participants did not have to be Muslim in order to join. Participants were asked to submit their recipes by email, so that MAX Ottawa could cover all of the costs of the food. Participants met in a downtown building, cooked together, ate together, and learned about Muslim Communal lifestyle.

04 GAIE, FRANCOPHONES ET FIERS (March 2018)

Gay, Francophone and Proud is a dinner, community village and entertainment event for the francophone and francophile GBT2Q guys into guys in Gatineau and Ottawa. It has been a recurring event every year since 2018.

2018-2019 (Four projects)

01 NOW WHAT!?! (April to June 2018)

A casual discussion and social group in Partnership with OSPN for gay and male-identified adults aged 40 and above.

Would you like to broaden your social circle but haven't done that for so long that it seems challenging? Maybe it's time to step a bit outside your comfort zone and come to a gathering. As maturing members of the gay community, we come together to create a welcoming environment where we can reduce isolation and expand our network of friends.

Added to permanent MAX programming July 2018

02 MAXPRESS YOURSELF (October to December 2018)

MAXpress Yourself is an arts-based social program for guys who live, work or play in Ottawa and who are into other guys. This is a free, drop-in monthly workshop presented by Max Ottawa. Previous artistic experience is not required.

MAXPress Yourself! presently meets each month to make your own original creation or a fabulous mess! Regardless if you are a social butterfly or the shy and quiet type, young or young at heart, all are welcome! Workshops are instructed by local artist/puppeteer Mikey Artelle. All project supplies are provided by MAX Ottawa!

Added to permanent MAX programming in February 2019

03 MAX AT THE MOVIES (February-March, 2019)

MAX at the Movies was a free social event for guys into guys, who live, work or play in Ottawa. After the movie, group members had an open group discussion about the film.

04 HYGGE HOMESHARING (March 2019)

Hygge Homesharing, pronounced HUE-GAH, is the Danish word for coziness. The founder, CJ Blake, aims to provide social support by pairing students and seniors in co-housing relationships. Through the community MAXimizer grant, CJ was able to do some community and partner consultations and to start conversations around 2SLGBTQ+ housing both within the community and with relevant stakeholders.

2019-2020 (Four projects)

01 COMFORTABLE IN HIS OWN SKIN (May 2019)

Imagine you've decided to take the radical decision to lose 300lbs and alter your body in the quest to be healthier and live longer – only to find that the new body you have brings a whole new set of challenges to how you see yourself. What would you do?

If you are Angus Wright, you agree to go to a stranger's home, take off all your clothes, and let her make huge photographs of you!

This was an opportunity to learn how Ottawa photographer Ruth Steinberg and Angus worked together to coax the beauty out of a body that Angus was reluctant to look at himself. There was also a moderated artist talk and panel discussion on the male nude in photography, masculinity, gender performance, and body image.

02 QU'ART QUEER COMMUNITY GARDENING CLUB (July 2019)

Qu'ART's Queer Community Gardening Club aimed to mix fun volunteer gardening work in local Ottawa community plots with learning, socializing, and fun intergenerational knowledge-sharing. Folks met at the Centretown Community Garden Project and all supplies and tools were provided. All queer people of any age were welcome to apply with a commitment to 2 or 3 flexible volunteer hours a week during the summer to help take care of the garden plot.

03 DADDIES AND DRAGONS (November 2019-January 2020)

Have you been looking for a queer-focused Dungeons and Dragons Campaign?

Heard all the hype about Dungeons and Dragons and wanted a queer-friendly space for you to explore the most magical and epic game on planet Earth?

This Community MAXimizer program, hosted at Centertown Community Health Centre, was created to answer "Yes!" to the above questions. Daddies and Dragons begin a campaign to stamp a GBT2S+ face onto D&D!

Beginners are VERY welcome, as are experts! No equipment required!

04 MAKEUP GENDERLESS (January-February 2020)

From Daytime to Drag contributed to the goal of building healthier and more resilient communities of guys into guys by de-stigmatizing makeup as a non-gendered art form and means of self-expression. Participants, particularly those who are guys into guys, were welcomed to creatively explore various makeup tools and techniques from a gender-neutral framework, which emphasizes makeup as a fun way to express oneself and practice new skills. With this event, Spectrum built on the existing strengths of our participants by creating a space where makeup knowledge and skills were shared, and where confidence, self-efficacy, and a sense of community solidarity had been fostered.

2020-2021 (Five projects)

01 T4T ZONE (April - August 2020)

T4T Zone is a project aimed to connect trans men (and gay, queer, bisexual, transmasculine, non-binary, Two-Spirit, gender-diverse men and folks) with other trans men & folks. Two virtual hangout meetings were held. The project provided a copy of “We Both Laughed in Pleasure: the Diaries of Lou Sullivan” and the group discussed it.

02 [DragonFruit](#) (September 2020- November 2020)

The [project](#) mandate is to unite self-identifying queer Asian as well as BIPOC groups living in the Ottawa-Gatineau region through fun, meaningful, and impactful projects that create awareness, education, and action. With the MAXimizer micro-grant, [event](#) series provided an opportunity for historically underrepresented groups to navigate theGBT2Q services and social spaces in the Ottawa-Gatineau region as well as connect with others within the community. Part of that was a virtual cooking class with CTV Masterchef’s [Ernie Chow!](#)

03 Podcast « C’pas juste de la porno » It’s not just a porn (September 2020- March 2021)

The podcast project focuses on the queer community, and on the community of guys into guys with guests who are themselves from theGBTQ+ community in Ottawa and Gatineau. The three hosts Sam, Alex and Jesse, will help you discover different issues related to sexuality and address themes that are relevant to guys’ thinking, particularly from a sexual health perspective, new technologies, consent, etc. The podcast serves as a bridge to guys who live outside of major centers and have more difficulty obtaining quality information about sexuality. This podcast is a production of the BRAS Outaouais with the support of MAX Ottawa and the Clinique de santé sexualité du Plateau. Directed by Ashley Gauthier, DJ. The podcast is available on all podcast platforms: [Apple](#), [Spotify](#), [Google](#), [Youtube](#), [Anchor.fm](#), and much more

04 [Queers Latin Ottawa](#) (December 2020- March 2021)

The project is a [social group](#) that focuses on queer Latin newcomer community members and connects them to the new Ottawa community. The group provides social connections and locals to help them adjust to life in Canada. As well as a way to keep roots and celebrate culture in this new environment. With the MAXimizer fund, the group will reach more queer Latinx newcomers folx, lunch the group on a bigger scale with a logo, promotional material, and an official Latin night event.

05 [Free Spirits](#): Accessing Our Queer Spirit/ (December 2020- March 2021)

Free Spirits is a five-discussion group session for guys into guys that explores theGBT2Q community’s historic involvement in religion and spirituality. Understanding these spiritual

roots, and how ourGBT2Q ancestors interacted within their spiritual traditions, will allow us to explore our own queer magic, and empower us to establish current and meaningful engagement with these traditions.

The discussion is based on readings from the book, *Queer Magic: LGBT+ Spirituality and Culture from Around the World* by [Tomás Prower](#) (2018).

2021-2022 (Six projects)

01 Jalsat (April 20 to March 22)

Jalsat will welcome the diasporic Arabic speaker Queers who has arrived in Ottawa recently. Through healing and bonding activities, we hope Queer newcomers feel comfortable to share the love of their homeland by starting to root their lives in Ottawa.

Queer newcomer community faces unique challenges while settling down in Ottawa. Issues can range from risk of poor mental health or less access to economic resources, to lower chances in stable employment and housing. Even so many initiatives (government and community) help refugees, they only focus on heterosexual and family. No program in town was cultural appropriate or Queers focus.

Our project will be virtually once a month. It will be facilitated by and for newcomer queer with events that help the newcomers to contribute to local communities, improve social skills, explore their neighborhoods, and find ways to integrate in Ottawa.

This project will be part of the MAX [Queerspora](#) program.

02 Life Beyond Status: Storytelling and HIV/AIDS (September to November 21)

This Maximizer Project is a storytelling outreach and performance skills workshop built for members of the Ottawa community with lived experience with HIV / AIDS. It is unique as a tool currently available in Ottawa.

Through this autumn 2021 project with a performance opportunity in November, selected participants will learn how to better express themselves through the art form of storytelling. With assistance from professional training and workshops, they will also learn the craft and history of storytelling as it relates to presentation and performance and lived experience. This knowledge will then help develop the individual life moments and perspectives they want to transform into stories.

The program coordinator will recommend adding this project to the permanent MAX programming.

03 Ottawa Pride Hockey (September 21 to March 22)

The focus of this project is to provide an environment where guys who are into guys, trans and non-binary folks, and other members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community can safely participate in hockey in an environment that encourages players to be comfortable with who they are - both on and off the ice. The sport of hockey has a history of both underlying and outright homophobia and transphobia, causing athletes who identify as members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community to either stop playing completely, or hide a part of their identity in order to conform to the heteronormative behaviours in both dressing rooms and the sport at large. This can have a dramatic and long-standing negative effect on their mental and physical health, especially if

hockey is a large part of their personal or familial identity. This project will help relaunch Ottawa Pride Hockey, a group whose goal is to provide an inclusive space for everyone to play hockey regardless of gender or sexual orientation and increase a sense of belonging/community around the sport. Ottawa Pride Hockey had a promising start in January 2019, but programming halted two months later due to COVID-19. This is the only group in Ottawa providing an inclusive and accessible place for folks to play hockey, and it will now resume as Ontario enters stage 3 of Reopening.

The program coordinator will recommend adding this project to the permanent MAX programming.

04 China Doll Drag Queen Workshop (January to February 2022)

Drag workshop with China Doll, the lead will send packages in the mail out to those who sign up for the workshops. Packages will include everything they need to participate in the zoom drag workshop. We will make things like sunglasses, earrings etc. Using glue, markers, glitter etc. China Doll will use her unique humor and laughter to engage participants, everyone can share what they have created at the end and we can all laugh together! One of the goals of this workshop is to increase the health and wellness of queer guys and to bring queer men together.

05 Pride Colouring Book (November 21 to March 22)

We would like to produce an uplifting colouring book featuring Queer Men. This colouring book will be accessible and free for anyone that is interested. We will use email and snail mail to distribute the colouring book. Printed copies will be limited. Colouring has been proven to be a positive activity during difficult times, like this lingering pandemic. Some proposed topics included in the colouring book can be some queer experiences, such as, coming out, HIV and STBBI testing, belonging. Etc.

The program coordinator will recommend adding this project to the permanent MAX programming.

06 Body Art Collective (November 21 to February 22)

Body Art Collective is a workshop and activity series, meeting three times monthly, to engage our community in all sides of the practice of figurative art: drawing, posing, and creating our own cohort. While the aim is principally social, we recognise that confidence in a possibly unfamiliar setting can be important in engaging with the activity and the other participants. On the drawing side, participants will learn how to describe what they see, how to approach representing the human body, how to develop and vary a style, and how to collaborate with Models. On the performance side, participants will learn what makes a pose artistically interesting, how to improvise movement, how to sustain a pose, how to avoid pain, and how to adapt their performance to different audiences and contexts.