



WE WANNA SUMMER  
CAMP PROGRAM!



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LGBTQ Family, Youth and Community Needs Assessment  
Survey Report

By

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## HIGHLIGHTS

81.6% of LGBTQ parents or guardians, LGBTQ youth and allies would either send their children or themselves attend a camp program designed specifically for the LGBTQ community.

65.6% of survey respondents preferred a summer sleep-away camp to a summer day camp at 59.2%.

One week was the preferred length for a camp program.

The majority of respondents, 62.4%, felt that a camp program would be more accessible to themselves and/or their families if it were offered on a sliding scale.

Many LGBTQ parents and guardians, 60%, have never sent their children to any camp before, including sleep-away, day, Christmas or spring break camps.

66.7% of respondents were willing to travel 100 km to 200 km from home to attend or send their child to camp.

A large number of LGBTQ youth, 63.2%, have attended camp.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Ten Oaks Project is a not-for-profit organization based in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. We are currently working towards the development of a summer camp program for children and youth with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, two spirit and queer (LGBTQ) parents and/or non-traditional families, youth who identify as LGBTQ and their allies.

While programs and services developed specifically for LGBTQ families are cropping up at various rates and in varying locations across the nation, there is currently only one Canadian summer camp program, based in Halifax, offered specifically to children of these families.

In April 2004, the Ten Oaks Project was set in motion with a needs assessment survey. The survey was a tool employed to determine if the LGBTQ community in the National Capital Region needed a summer camp. The survey also solicited information about the composition of LGBTQ families, the type of programs and services desired, and feedback specific to the development and design of a camp program. Additionally, the survey was opened to respondents across Canada to assess the potential for summer camp participation by individuals and families outside of the National Capital Region.

## SURVEY METHOD

Between April and August 2004, we connected with LGBTQ families, youth and service providers through our needs assessment survey. The survey simultaneously increased the awareness, by both queer and straight communities, of the lack of services and support for this group. It also raised the profile of the Ten Oaks Project.

Two English-language surveys were developed, one designed for a youth audience and one tailored to parents, guardians or allies. Available in both paper and electronic formats, both surveys combined closed- and open-ended question formats.

Throughout the four-month period during which we gathered data, surveys were continuously distributed using following methods:

- online mechanisms such as listservs, websites, newsletters and email channels for users of LGBTQ organizations and services;
- meetings of specific peer-support groups in Ottawa, such as the Rainbow Youth Advisory, Pink Triangle Youth, GLBT Parenting Drop-In and Gay Fathers of Ottawa.
- community health centres and social service providers;
- word-of-mouth; and,

- canvassing at Ottawa Pride events, 2004.

Respondents returned completed surveys to the Ten Oaks Project via email, mail or in-person.

## REPRESENTATION

The survey was employed as a tool to connect the Ten Oaks Project with LGBTQ families, youth and community. The respondent sample is not necessarily representative of the broader LGBTQ population in the National Capital Region and it is likely that certain segments of the queer population are over-represented in the survey sample. While the size and the composition of the LGBTQ community is currently unknown, it is also likely that the following individuals or groups are under-represented in our survey results:

- youth in grade schools or the first two years of high school;
- children of LGBTQ families;
- visible minority children and youth of LGBTQ families;
- visible minority LGBTQ youth, parents and guardians;
- aboriginal children of LGBTQ families, LGBTQ youth and LGBTQ parents;
- seniors and grandparents;
- gay, trans-identified and bisexual populations;
- low-income LGBTQ parents, children and youth;
- individuals living in the suburban and rural outlying areas of Ottawa-Gatineau;
- francophone LGBTQ parents, youth and allies;
- individuals whose first language is not English; and,
- children of LGBTQ families, LGBTQ parents, LGBTQ youth and allies that are not connected to the queer community.

The survey demographics should not to be interpreted as an indicator of the national composition of the LGBTQ population. The number of respondents who identified themselves as living outside of the Ottawa-Gatineau region and, more specifically, those living in a province other than Ontario are not a representative sample of the Canadian LGBTQ population.

## SURVEY RESPONSE

Given that a predetermined number of surveys were not distributed to specific individuals or organizations, it is not possible to determine a response rate. The Ten Oaks Project received 138 completed surveys. Thirteen surveys were removed from this study due to incomplete information - in most cases, a missed page. The results presented here are from the coded data of 125 surveys.

This section illustrates who we were able to connect with during the survey process, representing a cross-section of potential participants the proposed summer camp program, their families and project allies. This section sets a general demographic context for the survey results.

Of the 125 valid survey responses, 44% of respondents identified as parents or guardians. Children or youth aged 12-19 represented 30.4% of survey respondents. The remainder represents responses from allies who participated in the survey and includes respondents who did not identify as a child or youth, nor as an LGBTQ parent or guardian.

### *Geographic Location*

A 74.4% majority of all respondents lived in the National Capital Region, while an additional 13.6% lived elsewhere in Ontario. Within the survey sample, 2.4% of respondents were residents of Quebec, 2.4% were residents of the Prairie provinces and 1.6% were residents of the Atlantic provinces. Seven respondents, representing 5.6% of the total sample, lived in British Columbia. There were no respondents from the Territories. The following is an outline of participant sexual orientation, broken down into the groups parents/guardians, children/youth and allies:

- A 69.1% majority of all respondents who indicated they were parents or guardians lived in the National Capital Region, while an additional 14.5% lived elsewhere in Ontario. Within this group, 1.8% of respondents were residents of Quebec, 3.6% were residents of the Prairie provinces and 1.8% were residents of the Atlantic provinces. Five respondents, representing 9.0% of the total group, lived in British Columbia.
- An 85.9% majority of all respondents who indicated they were a child or youth lived in the National Capital Region, while an additional 7.9% lived elsewhere in Ontario. Within this group, one respondent was a resident of the Atlantic provinces.
- A 65.6% majority of respondents who indicated they were allies lived in the National Capital Region, while an additional 18.8% lived elsewhere in Ontario. Within this group, 6.3% of respondents were residents of Quebec and 3.1% were residents of the Prairie provinces and 6.3% were residents of British Columbia.

### *Gender Identification*

Gender Identification was selected as a demographic factor over sex to facilitate self-identification outside of anatomical definitions. This factor was presented as an open-ended question to respect a multiplicity of possible gender-orientations and in response to the multiplicity of conceptual understandings around gender. A 63.2% majority of respondents identified their gender as female or woman, while 28.0% indicated their gender as male or man. Four percent of survey respondents indicated their gender as both

male and female, neither male nor female, trans or, simply, human. Six respondents chose not to indicate a response for their gender identity.

### *Sexual Orientation*

A 41.6% majority of all respondents identified as lesbian, while 24.8% identified as gay. Within the survey sample, 11.2% of respondents identified as heterosexual or straight, 16.0% as bisexual and 4.8% as queer or questioning. Two respondents, representing 1.6% of the total sample, did not specify their sexual orientation. The following is an outline of participant sexual orientation, broken down in the groups, parents/guardians, children/youth and allies:

- A 58.2% majority of respondents who indicated they were parents or guardians also identified as lesbian, while 14.8% identified as gay. Within this group, 16.7% of respondents identified as heterosexual or straight, 9.3% as bisexual and 1.9% as queer.
- A 39.5% majority of respondents who indicated they were a child or youth also identified as gay, while 13.2% identified as lesbian. Within this group, 7.9% of respondents identified as heterosexual or straight, 28.9% as bisexual and 7.9% as queer or questioning. One respondent, representing 2.6% of the total sample, did not specify their sexual orientation.
- A 46.9% majority of respondents who indicated they were allies identified as lesbian, while 25.0% identified as gay. Within this group, 6.3% of respondents identified as heterosexual or straight, 12.5% as bisexual and 6.3% as queer or questioning. One respondent, representing 3.1% of the total sample, did not specify their sexual orientation.

### *Race and Ethnicity*

The demographics section of the survey included a portion on race and ethnicity, which showed that 76.8% of respondents identified as Caucasian while 12.8% did not provide an answer. The remaining ten percent of the sample included three aboriginal and nine visible minority persons of varying racial and ethnic backgrounds. As previously indicated, these survey results provide limited information and reflect a gap in data collection.

### *Annual Household Income*

A 33.6% majority of respondents did not specify their annual household income. Participants identifying as a child or youth accounted for 64.3% of this group and consistently cited the reason for omitting this information as simply not knowing it. Of those who did complete this section of the survey, 19.3% identified their annual household income as being or exceeding \$100,000, while 9.6% indicated it as less than \$20,000. Within the applicable survey sample, 22.9% of respondents claimed their annual household income to be between \$20,000 and \$39,999. Another 19.2% placed their household income between

\$40,000 and \$59,999 per year. The remaining participants, making up 28.9% of applicable survey responses, indicated their annual household incomes as at least \$60,000 but less than \$100,000.

AHI (\$)	NCR Respondents		All Respondents	
19,999 or less	7	7.5%	8	6.4%
20,000 - 29,999	9	9.7%	11	8.8%
30,000 - 39,999	5	5.4%	8	6.4%
40,000 - 49,999	5	5.4%	7	5.6%
50,000 - 59,999	6	6.5%	9	7.2%
60,000 - 69,999	10	10.8%	13	10.4%
70,000 - 79,999	3	3.2%	5	4.0%
80,000 - 89,999	2	2.2%	5	4.0%
90,000 - 99,999	0	0.0%	1	0.8%
100,000 or more	8	8.6%	16	12.8%
Unspecified	38	40.9%	42	33.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Annual Household Income of Respondents in the National Capital Region and Annual Household Income of All Respondents*

**ALL ABOUT MY FAMILY: LGBTQ PARENTS AND GUARDIANS SPEAK**

There were 55 survey participants who indicated they were parents or guardians, resulting in an average of “1.6” children per respondent. Of respondents with children, 26.4% reported having one child, while 12.8% reported having two children. The most children reported by a single respondent was three, a response that accounts for 4.8% of all answers by parents and guardians. Together, parent and guardian respondents reported having a combined total of 83 children.

Approximately 3/4 of parents and guardians, 71.2%, reported that their children were 3-17, or of camp age. Most sleep-away summer camps accept campers between the ages of 8-16, while day camps typically offer programs to children

Average	Number of Children	
< 2	19	22.9%
3 to 5	18	21.7%
6 to 8	14	16.9%
9 to 11	14	16.9%
12 to 14	11	13.3%
15 to 17	2	2.4%
18 >	3	3.6%
Unspecified	2	2.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Age of Children as Reported by Parent and Guardian Respondents*

as young as 3 or 4 up to those in their early to mid-teens, 13 to 15. Of the camp-aged children, 46% would be old enough to attend a sleep-away camp program and 78% would be old enough to attend a day camp.

Gender	Number of Children	
Male	32	38.6%
Female	44	53.0%
Other	0	0.0%
Unspecified	7	8.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Gender of Children as Reported by Parent and Guardian Respondents*

The number of female children greatly outnumbered male children in families headed by LGBTQ parents that responded to this survey. Parents reported that 53.0% of their children were female and 38.6% were male. The gender of seven children, or 8.4%, was not specified by parental and guardian respondents.

Since very little is currently known about the composition of LGBTQ families, parents and guardians were asked to identify their relationship to the children in their families. The majority of children in the LGBTQ families surveyed were biological, 66.3%, followed by adopted children at 18.1%. The number of reported step-children is 9.6% and foster children is 1.2%.

What these answers only begin to reflect is the diversity of LGBTQ family composition, as many parents indicated through additional comments provided on the survey itself. For example, one trans-identified parent noted, "It would be REALLY good to have a category under 'relationship to child' that reads 'biological child of same-sex partner.' I have one of these, and two who are adopted from orphanages in Africa - these are very different categories." This parent highlights the fact that adoption in LGBTQ families can be a term employed in two very different ways. Firstly, to describe a non-biological child who is adopted by one or both partners, or secondly, the biological child of one partner who is adopted by the non-biological partner.

Other comments from parents and guardians also challenged notions of what 'biological' means to same-sex families. One lesbian parent identified her 2-year-old daughter's relation to her as the "not yet adopted biological child of spouse conceived through AI (artificial insemination)." Here, biological is a term that not only applies to the birth mother, but to the non-birth mother as well.

Relation	Number of Children	
Biological	55	66.3%
Foster	1	1.2%
Adopted	15	18.1%
Step	8	9.6%
Other	4	4.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Relationship of Children to Parents and/or Guardians as Reported by Parent and Guardian Respondents*

The diversity of LGBTQ familial structures is further revealed when parents and guardians were asked with whom their children live. It's important to note

that the total number of responses to this question is greater than the 55 parent or guardian respondents by 6 answers. This reflects the multiple living arrangements that some children experience.

Just under half, 49.2% of children, live with a parent and their same-sex partner(s) or parent(s). The number of children living with a single parent, the survey respondent, was 8.2%. Children who live with other parent(s) were reported by 6.6% of survey respondents and 18.0% identified that there were other living arrangements in place.

Eighteen percent (18.0%) of children live with the survey respondent and their opposite-sex partner(s) or parent(s). The significant proportion of children who live with parent(s) or partner(s) in an opposite-sex or heterosexual relationship, nearly 1/5 of the children and youth, reveals the variety of forms LGBTQ families may take.

This group of children accounts for those living in shared-custody arrangements - children who live with same-sex parent(s) part of the time and with opposite-sex parent(s) the other, those with bisexual parents and those who hail from other non-traditional families, such as polyamorous family structures. Children from mixed-orientation marriages or relationships, where one partner or spouse identifies as heterosexual and the other as gay, lesbian or bisexual, are also represented in this category.

**Who Children Live With**

Live with...	Respondent Answer	
Respondent	5	8.2%
Respondent and same-sex partner(s)/parents	30	49.2%
Respondent and opposite-sex partner(s)/parents(s)	11	18.0%
Other parent(s)	4	6.6%
Other	11	18.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61*</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Who Children Live with as Reported by Parent and Guardian Respondents*

\*Due to shared custody arrangements, the number of respondents is greater than 55 as this graph reflects that children may live with one or more parent(s)/set of parent(s)

**ALL ABOUT MY FAMILY: LGBTQ YOUTH AND CHILDREN OF LGBTQ FAMILIES SPEAK**

Children or youth represented 30.4%, or 38 of the 125, survey respondents. The majority of youth, 89%, identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or questioning. Three youth, or 8%, identified as straight and one chose not to identify.

When asked about their living arrangements, a small number of the surveyed children and youth indicated they were from LGBTQ families; 7.9% reported that they currently live with same-sex parents. Not all of the three youth who defined their sexual orientation as straight were from LGBTQ families. Of the

three youth that said they lived with gay parent(s), one identified as straight and two identified as gay.

The children and youth surveyed reported a wide range of living situations. While the majority of children and youth indicated that they lived with opposite-sex parents, 28.9%, the number of children and youth who lived alone, with guardians, single parents or had other living arrangements were similar and varied from three to five individuals, or 13.2% to 21.1%. These numbers are detailed in the accompanying table.

Lives With...	Number of Youth	
Alone	5	13.2%
Same-Sex Parents	3	7.9%
Opposite-Sex Parents	11	28.9%
Guardian(s)	6	15.8%
Single Parent	5	13.2%
Other	8	21.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**CAMP HISTORY OF CHILDREN OF LGBTQ FAMILIES AND LGBTQ YOUTH**

The majority of LGBTQ parents and guardians, 60%, have never sent their children to a sleep-away camp, day camp, Christmas or March/Spring break camp program. Those who have not sent their kids to camp provided a wide range of reasons:

- Camp is too expensive, 11.1%
- Camps are inaccessible to LGBTQ families, 9.3%
- Never had the opportunity to send my children to camp, 9.3%
- Not interested in a camp program, 7.4%
- Camps are inaccessible to LGBTQ youth, 5.6%
- Never thought about it, 3.7%
- And, 33.3% cited other reasons for never having sent their children camp, frequently that their children are still too young.

Of the parents and guardians, 40%, who have sent their children to camp, service-use was evenly split between day camp and sleep-away camp programs. When asked how they would rate the camp experience, parents generally rated their child’s experience higher than their own.

Conversely, the majority of LGBTQ youth (63.2%) who responded to this survey *had* attended camp - 48% day camp, 68% sleep-away camp, and 8% another type of camp. Youth on average generally rated their camp experiences as good, 4 on a 5 point scale. However, there was significant variation in youth responses which ranged between responses of 2 and 5. One male youth who identified as gender-bending and rated his experience as bad, 2 out of 5, commented that he was, “*not really accepted and was accused of being gay for helping someone.*” Another youth who identified as a gay male and rated his camp experiences as good, 4 out of 5, stated that “*on average, they were all*

*good experiences and positive things were gained from each but they obviously had negative periods within them at times."*

The youth respondents, 34.2%, who had never attend a camp program offered the following reasons:

- Never thought about it, 27.8%
- Did not have the opportunity, 22.2%
- Not interested in attending camp, 22.2%
- Couldn't find a camp program that suited me, 5.6%

**A CAMP FOR CHILDREN OF LGBTQ FAMILIES AND LGBTQ YOUTH**

When parents, guardians, allies and LGBTQ youth were asked if they would be willing to send their children, or themselves attend a camp program, 80.0% indicated that they would. When parents, guardians, allies and LGBTQ youth were asked if they would be willing to send their children, or to attend themselves, a camp program *designed specifically for the LGBTQ community*, 81.6% of responded positively.

Comparing the percentages, note the change in the number of parents who would be willing to send their child to camp, or youth who are willing to attend a camp, with those numbers in the column titled 'camp specific to the LGBTQ community':

Respondent	Willing to send child or to attend camp	Willing to send child or to attend camp for the LGBTQ community
Parent	85.2%	77.8%
Youth	65.8%	78.9%
Guardian	100.0%	100.0%
Ally	87.5%	90.6%
% of all respondents	80.0%	81.6%

the number of parents decrease, while the number of youth increase. A closer look at these numbers reveals that many youth who had selected 'maybe' when asked if they would be willing to attend camp, answered 'yes' when that camp was specifically for LGBTQ youth and children of LGBTQ families. With respect to parents, slightly fewer were sure that they would send their child to a camp for children of LGBTQ families. A lesbian parent from British Columbia voices her fears, *"I think this is a great idea but I am concerned that our child would have to explain to his peers that he is going to a different camp."*

Segregation is a concern that has not been reflected in the needs assessment surveys, but is one that should be addressed. The concept of segregation, separating the children of gay families from other children or separating queer

youth from other youth, arises because it may not be immediately clear why programming for these children and youth is necessary. One GLBTQ parent from the National Capital Region states the need for this camp clearly:

*We certainly worry about sending the kids to camp, and this is probably one of the biggest issues facing LGBT families. The kids deserve a real break from the homophobia they tackle all the time, but a generic camp environment could be quite toxic for them emotionally.*

A camp program that is guaranteed to be LGBTQ-positive ensures that kids can be kids without having to worry about 'outing' their families or themselves, can be free from comments like "that's so gay" or from harassment that may happen when adults are out of earshot. As a supportive ally from the Ottawa area states, "I was worried about the segregation of LGBTQ families, but the more I think about it, the more I believe it's essential to have guaranteed, positive environments...I think [this camp] is a phenomenal idea!"

### Type of Camp

When asked what kind of camp program children and youth would like to attend, the majority of respondents (65.6%) chose a summer sleep-away camp.

#### What Type of Camp

Respondent	Summer Day Camp	Summer Sleep-Away Camp	Spring/March Break Camp	Christmas Break Camp
Parent	74.1%	57.4%	33.3%	14.8%
Youth	42.1%	71.1%	28.9%	15.8%
Guardian	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ally	56.3%	71.9%	34.4%	6.3%
% of all respondents	59.2%	65.6%	32.0%	12.8%

*Percentages (%) may be greater than 100.0% because more than one camp type was selected.*

Looking more closely at the numbers, youth, guardians and allies prefer a summer sleep-away camp program slightly more than parents. The difference between parents who wanted to send their children to a summer day camp (74.1%) and those who chose a summer sleep-away camp (57.4%) was 15.7%. Considering that many survey respondents selected both sleep-away and day camp, the greater number of parents who wanted a day camp could be linked to the ages of their children. The children of parent respondents are mostly under the age of 8 (61.5%).

### Camp Length

In considering the length of a camp program, one-week was the most popular choice for all camp types. With respect to a day camp, the greatest number of respondents selected one week (33.6%), which was followed by two weeks (16.8%) and less than one week (13.6%).

Examining the desired length of a sleep-away camp, slightly more respondents preferred a one-week camp (35.2%) to a two-week camp (29.6%).

Length (weeks)	Total Responses	
1 or less	15	12.0%
1	44	35.2%
2	37	29.6%
3	6	4.8%
4	7	5.6%
4 or more	9	7.2%

*Total answers are greater than the number of survey respondents due to multiple choices of camp length.*

Length (weeks)	Total Responses	
1 or less	17	13.6%
1	42	33.6%
2	21	16.8%
3	8	6.4%
4	5	4.0%
4 or more	9	7.2%

*Total answers are greater than the number of survey respondents due to multiple choices of camp length.*

#### Distance of Camp From Home

Given that a camp for children of LGBTQ families and LGBTQ youth will be the only camp of its kind in Canada, parents and youth from the targeted National Capital Region and from across the country have expressed interest in the program. In choosing a location, it is important to consider how far people would be willing to travel to get to camp, or send their children from home.

Distance (km)	Summer Sleep-Away Camp
25 or less	3.6%
25-50	11.9%
50-100	13.1%
100-200	21.4%
200-300	10.7%
300-400	3.6%
400-500	4.8%
500 or greater	26.2%

For a sleep-away camp, a significant number of parents and youth who responded to the survey indicated that they would be willing to travel more than 500 km (26.2%) or between 100-200 km (21.4%) to attend this camp program. A LGBTQ parent from Alberta pointed out that while distance was not a barrier, it would be important for *"someone to meet [my child] at the bus or airport if they are coming in from a distance."* Choosing a location that was one to one-and-a-half hour drive (100 to 150 km) from home would appeal to the greatest number of parents and youth.

Exploring how far people would be willing to travel to attend a day camp, Spring/March break or Christmas break camp is not necessary. Since parents or youth would need to get there in the morning and leave at the end of the day, these camp programs would have to be within a reasonable geographic distance from home.

### Cost of Camp Program

Looking at the cost of a day camp versus sleep-away camp, survey respondents were willing to pay more for a sleep-away camp experience than a day camp experience, which is inline with the increased costs associated with running a residential camp program.

The greatest number of respondents (30.7%) were willing to pay between \$100 to \$250 to send one child to a day camp program. This was followed closely by 24.0% of people willing to pay a maximum of \$250 to \$500 for a day camp. If individuals who

are willing to pay more than the maximum are included in this figure, then 49.3% of respondents are willing to pay a minimum of \$250 to \$500 and 80.0% of respondents \$100 to \$250 for a day camp program.

Conversely, a greater number of survey respondents (24.2%) were willing to pay a higher maximum amount of \$250 to \$500 to send one child to a sleep-away camp program, which was closely followed by 20.9% respondents willing to pay a cost of \$100 to \$250. Again, if individuals who are willing to pay more than the maximum are included in this figure, then 49.5% of respondents are willing to pay a minimum of \$250 to \$500 and 70.3% of respondents \$100 to \$250 for a sleep-away camp program.

Cost (\$) per child	Day Camp	Sleep-Away Camp
100 or less	16.0%	12.1%
100-250	30.7%	20.9%
250-500	24.0%	24.2%
500-750	10.7%	11.0%
750-1000	6.7%	5.5%
1000-1250	1.3%	2.2%
1250-1500	0.0%	0.0%
1500-1750	0.0%	0.0%
1750-2000	0.0%	0.0%

Cost (\$)	Parent	Youth
100 or less	9.3%	23.7%
100-250	40.7%	21.1%
250-500	21.1%	23.7%
500-750	5.6%	7.9%
750-1000	3.7%	0.0%
Unspecified	7.4%	21.1%

Breaking down cost further by respondent type, parents and guardians are able to pay significantly more than youth. Combining the cost of day camp with sleep-away camp, 40.7% of parents reported that they would be able to afford \$100 to \$250 to send one child camp. On the other hand, nearly 50% fewer youth, or 21.1% of youth, were able to afford the same amount. A closer look at the figures also reveals that 1/5 of youth were not able to state what they or their families could afford for a camp program.

### Sliding Scale

With many people citing cost as a barrier to programs, respondents were asked if a sliding scale would be of assistance. A sliding scale would allow camp fees to be negotiable, not fixed, and allow each family or individual to determine their camp fee according to their household income. A sliding scale would ensure that all children and youth are given an opportunity to have a camp experience regardless of an ability to pay for a camp program.

The majority of respondents, 62.4%, felt that a camp program would be more accessible with a sliding scale available. One LGBTQ youth from the National Capital Region stated that the *"sliding scale idea is really good! It allows everyone to feel as though they have the opportunity of somewhere to go. It leaves doors open for when they really need it."* A LGBTQ parent from the National Capital Region also supports the sliding scale because of financial limitations: *"I think a camp would be an excellent social activity for my child, but we would need a subsidy to afford it. My partner is disabled and can't work."*

#### Would a Sliding Scale Make Camp More Accessible to You?

	Number of Respondents	
Yes	78	62.4%
No	18	14.4%
Maybe	17	13.6%
Unspecified	12	9.6%
Total	125	100.0%

### Camp Programming

A wide range of camp programming was desired by survey respondents. Typical camp activities like arts (71.7%), sports (72.5%) and aquatics (62.5%) were deemed important to a camp program. The most frequent activity selected by survey respondents was the outdoors at 79.2%. Outdoor programming could consist of activities like canoeing, hiking and nature studies. Social justice programming was selected by 58.3% of survey respondents as many individuals thought that issues like the environment, sexism or the media should be explored in a camp context.

#### Camp Programming

	Number of Respondents		Rank
Aquatics	75	62.5%	4
Arts	86	71.7%	3
Educational	68	56.7%	7
LGBTQ Families	55	45.8%	8
LGBTQ Youth	74	61.7%	5
Outdoor	95	79.2%	1
Social Justice	70	58.3%	6
Sports	87	72.5%	2

*Percentages (%) total more than 100.0% as more than one camp activity was selected.*

Programming specific to LGBTQ issues experienced by youth and families was also popular. Programming for LGBTQ youth ranked 5<sup>th</sup> at 61.7% and programming for LGBTQ families ranked 8<sup>th</sup> at 45.8%.

While parents overwhelmingly supported the creation of a camp specifically for the LGBTQ community, many parents did

not feel that programming specific to children of LGBTQ families and LGBTQ families was as important. This can be attributed to the fact that many parents felt the strongest asset of the camp was the opportunity it presents for campers to meet other children and youth from families similar to theirs. An Alberta LGBTQ parent wanted "*nothing really specific about glbt issues, just a fun place where kids can talk about their family without anyone looking weird at them.*" One LGBTQ couple spoke about their wishes for their child at camp:

*It would be fantastic for him to have the opportunity to spend some quality time getting to know other children who come from the same/similar type of family as his own - especially since we live in rural Ontario where such diversity is almost non-existent.*

Another LGBTQ parent from British Columbia said that it is the mixture of quality camp programming and the community from which this camp is offered that is most important to her:

*I would look for a camp experience that provided a rich, diverse and safe environment - with much physical activity, arts, nature, and social interaction (both play and learning). As our family 'looks' different from many others (single lesbian mother, single child), I hope to find communities where my child will see himself mirrored, and accepted, and honoured for exactly who he is. Thank you for starting this initiative - an exciting prospect.*

A camp for gay families creates a safe space for children to BE kids and to BE free from the negative impact that homophobia can have on self-esteem and a positive sense-of-self. One parent from the National Capital Region who supports this camp stated that, "*there is a definite need for camps for children of GLBT families. Often, our daughter tried to avoid conversations regarding her 'family.'*"

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Having found that overwhelming support and the need for a camp program tailored to children of LGBTQ families and LGBTQ youth exists in both the National Capital Region and across the country, the Ten Oaks Project makes the following recommendations supported by the survey results.

1

Offer a one-week, summer sleep-away camp program for children and youth of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, two spirit, queer (LGBTQ) and/or non-traditional families, youth who identify as LGBTQ and their allies.

Guarantee that camp programming is offered on a sliding scale to make sure that it is accessible to all children, youth and families regardless of their income.

2

3

Hold camp in a location that is not more than 200 km from the National Capital Region.

Camp activities should be a mixture of outdoor, sports, arts, aquatics, social justice elements, with programming specific to LGBTQ youth and families offered to a lesser degree.

4



**INTERESTED IN HAVING A CHILD  
ATTEND A CAMP PROGRAM?**

**INTERESTED IN HAVING A CAMP  
PROGRAM DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY  
FOR THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY?**

**FILL OUT THIS SURVEY!**

Programming and services developed specifically for LGBTQ families sometimes feel few and far between. While programs are cropping up at various rates and in varying locations across Canada, there is currently only one summer camp program offered specifically to children of these families.

**Ten Oaks Project  
c/o Holly Wagg  
2-203 Belmont Ave.  
Ottawa, ON K1S 0V9**

**(613) 730-6983  
info@tenoaksproject.org**

My interest in starting another camp program arises from my own involvement in summer camps and from my volunteer work with an American two-week camp experience for kids of LGBTQ and non-traditional families. I would like to start a similar initiative in the Ottawa-Gatineau region and this survey is designed to explore whether or not there is a need and interest for such a camp program.

I invite you to take the time to participate in this survey to determine if there is a need, by both parents and youth, for camp programs specifically tailored to the children of LGBTQ families and for youth who are queer or questioning themselves. These questions are designed to get a sense of your family and the kind of camping program you would be interested in seeing developed. Your feedback is incredibly important. Your input will help to shape the vision of this project; it will inform *if* and *what* kind of camp is set up and will help to get the funding necessary to make this project a reality. If you have any questions about this survey or the project itself, please do not hesitate to contact us as indicated in the contact information provided on this page. You can read more about us online at [www.tenoaksproject.org](http://www.tenoaksproject.org). Thank you for your time and careful thought in filling out this survey. Your input is greatly appreciated. Please return completed surveys by mail or email.

**I am a(n)...**

- Parent
- Guardian
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

*If you are answering this survey because you have an interest in the described camp program but do not have children, please answer the following questions in relation to your immediate needs or in anticipation of your future needs.*

<b>City</b>	<b>Province/Territory</b>

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Gender Identification</b>

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Annual Household Income</b>

<b>I have _____ child(ren).</b>				
<b>AGE</b>				
<b>GENDER</b>				
<b>RELATION</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Step <input type="checkbox"/> Ward <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Step <input type="checkbox"/> Ward <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Step <input type="checkbox"/> Ward <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Biological <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Step <input type="checkbox"/> Ward <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

*For additional children, please attach a blank page.*

**My child(ren) currently live(s) with...**

- Myself
- Myself and same-sex partner(s)/parent(s)
- Myself and opposite-sex partner(s)/parent(s)
- Other parent(s)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- N/A

**Have your child(ren) ever attended a camp program?**

- Yes
- No
- N/A

**If no, why?**

- Never thought about it
- Too expensive
- Never had the opportunity
- Did not think they would be interested in camp
- Camps are inaccessible to LGBTQ families
- Camps are inaccessible to LGBTQ youth
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Comments**

**If yes, what kind of camp did your child(ren) attend?**

- Day
- Sleep-away
- Other

**For how long?** \_\_\_\_\_

**How would you rate this experience for yourself? (Check one.)**

●-----●

HORRIBLE       BAD       OK       GOOD       EXCELLENT

**How would you rate this experience for your child? (Check one.)**

●-----●

     HORRIBLE      BAD      OK      GOOD      EXCELLENT     

**Additional Comments**

**Would you be willing to send your child to a camp program?**

- Yes     No     Maybe

**Would you be willing to send your child(ren) to camp specifically for children of LGBTQ families?**

- Yes     No     Maybe

**Additional Comments**

If **no**, thank you for your time in completing this survey. Please return it to address indicated on the first page of this survey. If **yes**, please continue with the questions.

**What kind of camp program would you like your child(ren) to attend?**

- Summer day camp
- Summer sleep-away camp
- Spring/March break program
- Christmas break program

**Preferred length?**

- Less than one week
- 1 week
- 2 weeks
- 3 weeks
- 4 weeks
- More than four week

**How much could your family reasonably afford to send one of your children to camp?**

- Less than \$100
- \$100 - \$250
- \$250 - \$500
- \$500 - \$750
- \$750 - \$1000
- \$1000 - \$1250
- \$1250 - \$1500
- \$1500 - \$1750
- \$1750 - \$2000
- More than \$2000

**A sliding scale would allow each family to determine their fee according to their household income. Would camp be more accessible to you and your child(ren) if the fee were offered on a sliding scale basis?**  Yes  No

**What kind of programming would your child(ren) like to participate in?**

- Programming specifically about issues relevant to LGBTQ families
- Sports
- Arts
- Aquatics
- Outdoor
- Educational
- Social Justice (anti-oppression, isms, etc.)

<b>Additional Comments</b>   
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**What is the farthest distance away from your home, in kilometres, you would be willing to send your child(ren)?**

- Less than 25km
- 25km to 50km
- 50km to 100km
- 100km to 200km
- 200km to 300km
- 300km to 400km
- 400km to 500km
- More than 500km

<b>Closing Comments?</b>
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**Your input on the design of a camp program for children of LGBTQ families and LGBTQ youth is important. If you would like to stay connected to this project, please check any of the following that apply and provide your contact information. Contact information is not necessary nor is it mandatory for the completion of this survey.**

- I would like to be contacted in the future about camp opportunities.
- I would like to participate in the camp planning process.
- I would like to be personally contacted to give additional feedback.
- I am willing to be contacted to share my ideas and experiences of why I would like to see a camp for my children, to give a story to be included in funding proposals.
- Please do not contact me at this time.

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Telephone</b>	
<b>Email</b>	

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.**



**INTERESTED IN HAVING A CAMP PROGRAM?**

**INTERESTED IN HAVING A CAMP PROGRAM DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY?**

**FILL OUT THIS YOUTH SURVEY!**

Programming and services developed specifically for LGBTQ families sometimes feel few and far between. While programs are cropping up at various rates and in varying locations across Canada, there is currently only one summer camp program offered specifically to children of these families.

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**I am...**

- 12 or under
- 13-19

**City**

**Province/Territory**

--	--

**Sexual Orientation**

**Gender Identification**

--	--

**Race/Ethnicity**

**Annual Household Income**

--	--

**I currently live...**

- Alone
- With same-sex parents
- With opposite-sex parents
- With one or more guardians
- With a single parent
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Additional Comments</b>
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**Have you ever attended a camp program?** \_\_\_\_\_

- Yes
- No
- N/A

**If no, why?**

- Never thought about it
- Too expensive
- Never had the opportunity
- Wasn't interested in camp
- I didn't find a camp program that suited me
- Other:

**If yes, what kind of camp have you attended?**

- Day
- Sleep-away
- Other

**For how long?** \_\_\_\_\_



- Sports
- Arts
- Aquatics
- Outdoor
- Educational
- Social Justice (anti-oppression, isms, etc.)

**Additional Comments**

**How much could you or your family reasonably afford to send you to camp?**

- Less than \$100
- \$100 - \$250
- \$250 - \$500
- \$500 - \$750
- \$750 - \$1000
- \$1000 - \$1250
- \$1250 - \$1500
- \$1500 - \$1750
- \$1750 - \$2000
- More than \$2000
- Don't Know

**A sliding scale would allow each family to determine their fee according to their household income. Would camp be more accessible to you if the fee were offered on a sliding scale basis?**    Yes    No    Don't Know

**What is the farthest distance away from your home, in kilometres, you would be able to travel for camp?**

- Less than 25km
- 25km to 50km
- 50km to 100km
- 100km to 200km
- 200km to 300km
- 300km to 400km
- 400km to 500km
- More than 500km

**Closing Comments?**

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**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.**