

RAINBOW HISTORY PROJECT YEAR 18: 2018

In 2018 Rainbow History Project made great strides toward implementation of our strategic plan, which we had initiated in 2017 to help insure that we would continue in the future to attract the resources needed to meet our mission.

Most notably, our review showed that while RHP's collection and programs have reflected the diversity of the many LGBTQ communities in metropolitan Washington, our volunteer corps was not equally diverse and this could be a threat to our mission in the long term. As an important first step to address this, we issued the following Diversity Statement and took concerted actions to incorporate it into our decision making.

The mission of the Rainbow History Project is to collect, preserve, and promote an active knowledge of the history, arts, and culture of metropolitan Washington DC's diverse LGBTQ+ communities. That can be accomplished only if our collection, volunteer corps, and programming reflect and represent the full diversity of those communities and their allies. It is therefore our fundamental policy to seek out the active participation and involvement of individuals of all backgrounds -- particularly those from under-represented groups -- who agree with and are committed to carrying out the goals of our organization.

This Diversity Statement is included in all of our communications to reinforce our commitment.

As an initial step to foster volunteer corps diversity, we looked at ways to encourage anyone who attends a meeting or event to come back again. Recognizing that individuals are more likely to return if they see others that look like themselves, we considered ways to attract threshold levels of groups who have been underrepresented in our volunteer corps – women, transgender, people of color.

Our first active step was to hold a special event for women and non-male identified volunteers, inviting them to an informal get-together at a private home to “Meet the Matriarchs” – our Community Pioneers who were instrumental in creating lesbian and transgender institutions in DC. Approximately 15 Matriarchs and 15 younger volunteers attended.

The Matriarchs event was very successful, and it also highlighted the fact that age is an important element of diversity, especially in a community where most of us do not have the traditional avenue of grandparent to parent to child transmission of our stories. Going forward, Rainbow History Project will try to build into its programs elements that cross generations.

Rainbow History Project has already taken one step toward age diversity. In 2018, six of our 14 board members were 30 or under. Two were in their 70s. This wide age range has helped us better meet our mission. RHP has always been effective at collecting and preserving our history, but has not always been equally effective promoting it. Our younger board members have expanded RHP's social media presence, attracting many younger folks to our public panels and other programs. This is essential to RHP's long term viability as there are fewer and fewer individuals in our community – and in the RHP

volunteer pool – who actually lived through the early post-Stonewall period when many of our community institutions were first created. Younger generations must be educated about our history before they can be motivated to perform collection and preservation tasks.

We are happy to report that a review of 2018 shows that Rainbow History Project has strengthened its promotional and educational capabilities and activities while continuing its collection and preservation activities.

ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS

- In 2018, Rainbow History Project made significant changes to the underlying technology of our archival catalog system to allow us to grow our online presence in the years to come.
 - Through the assistance of volunteers we were able to consolidate our catalog and website to a single hosting service and to change the address to be seamless.
 - Our archives are now located at archives.rainbowhistory.org.
 - We have started uploading digitized materials in the Internet Archive to have audio-visual files stored online through that free service.
 - We've completed the digitization of the One in Ten People documentary collection and all episodes can now be viewed online through the Internet Archive.
- Rainbow History Project received new collections materials from several donors.
 - Jessica Xavier donated new materials when she participated in a follow-up oral history interview.
 - Rick Rose donated materials from his time in leadership of the One in Ten Film Festival.
 - Paul Butler donated a large collection of photographs, negatives, and artwork he created between 1978 and 1983 for the ClubHouse dance club. This will be a pivotal collection for documenting the African American LGBT experience in Washington, DC during that period. On the day that we picked up this collection. Paul, Rainey Cheeks (who was the ClubHouse manager), and Buddy Sutson had a long discussion of the ClubHouse and its community impact, which was audio taped for our collection.
 - Nicolas Shi donated his collection of the Silk Road, a monthly publication of Asians and Friends of Washington that he edited during the 1990s.
 - Eva Freund donated her collection of women's music tapes.
 - Matthew Brosius donated his collection of documents from the mid-1980s relating to Black and White Men Together of Washington, DC, during which time he held various leadership positions with that organization, including steering committee president.
- The Historical Society of Washington, DC was closed to public researchers for much of 2018 as its facilities at the Carnegie Library at Mount Vernon Square were undergoing a major renovation. While this hindered public access to our collection (limited access was available at the Newseum), we were able to take the opportunity to conduct a full inventory and improve housing and organization of the materials in the collection. The anticipated reopening to researchers is late Spring 2019.

ORAL HISTORIES

In 2018, our small corps of trained volunteers collected 14 new oral histories. Highlights included youth advocacy stories and the beginning of a large-scale project to collect histories from members of the Capital Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. Ongoing efforts are generating a more diverse

group of stories that better reflect all aspects of diversity in our communities. Volunteers and suggestions for narrators are always welcome.

SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY

In 2018, Rainbow History led 12 guided tours of historic LGBT Capitol Hill and Dupont Circle, serving more than 250 participants, marking it as the most active year for guided tours in memory. The Capitol Hill tours, led by Philip Clark as part of the annual WalkingTour DC events sponsored by Cultural Tourism, had to be given twice to accommodate demand and raised RHP's visibility in DC. RHP also led tours for visitors from many out of town colleges, mostly for classes in gender studies and urban studies. Of these tours, three were "repeat business," the other visitors found RHP through our website. Other notable tours were provided to legal LGBTQ youth advocates during a national conference; to an honors urban studies class from the University of Michigan-Flint that explored both Capitol Hill and Dupont Circle with RHP on a single day with lunch at historic Mr. Henry's on Capitol Hill; and to a huge group brought together by Pride Outside and Dance Exchange to explore LGBT Dupont Circle. RHP's Philip Clark and Jeff Donahoe worked with Dance Exchange to supply DC LGBT history as the dance company developed Growing Our Own Gardens. Dance Exchange used RHP's "places and spaces" data base content in the piece and in educational materials available at the two performances.

EDUCATION, PROMOTION, AND OUTREACH

PUBLIC PANELS

- In 2018, RHP formalized its process for developing and organizing public panels on historical topics of community interest by creating a committee of volunteers and board members.
- On May 9, RHP presented a history panel on Women Leadership, Lesbian Activists, and the AIDS Crisis in DC at the Shaw branch of the DC Public Library. The panel featured Papaya Mann, Colevia Carter, Patricia Nalls, and Dr. Patricia Hawkins and was moderated by RHP board member Kate Ruane.
- On October 18, RHP presented a history panel entitled Cops and Queers that explored the history of the police and the LGBTQ+ community in DC. The panel featured Dee Curry, Mindy Daniels, and Brett Parson and was moderated by Rayceen Pendarvis.
- Both panels were video-recorded by volunteer Irene Rojas and the recordings are now part of the RHP collection.

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Chief Archivist Vincent Slatt appeared on behalf of RHP to provide historical context to a discussion of "Surviving a Plague: How Local Washington Fought the HIV/AIDS Epidemic" on the Kojo Nnamdi Show on WAMU.
- After that appearance, Vincent was invited to participate in a roundtable discussion of AIDS as a pandemic hosted by the Atlantic Monthly.
- Chuck Goldfarb attended the DC History Conference Nov. 2-3 at the University of the District of Columbia at which presenters in three panels had used (and acknowledged) the RHP archival collection. RHP was cited during question and answer sessions.
- Vincent Slatt appeared as a guest to discuss "The Purpose of Pride" for KERA Radio's THINK.
- The Mundo Verde Public Charter Elementary School invited Rainbow History to participate in its Fifth Grade Project on Representation, in which students interviewed individuals in DC

who have been actively involved in broadening representation in public decision making. The students prepared questions in advance and videotaped the interviews. Later the students prepared one-page essays that focused on issues raised in the interviews and also drew portraits of the interviewees that were included with the essays in a coloring book. RHP board members Chuck Goldfarb and Rob Berger were interviewed (separately) along with public figures such as City Council Member Alyssa Silverman. Many of the questions for Chuck and Rob dealt with how the LGBT community gained representation over time.

- On July 11, Board members Cassandra Ake, Rob Berger, and Chuck Goldfarb participated in “Ask Rayceen Squares,” a game show hosted by Rayceen Pendarvis at the HRC headquarters building. They had the opportunity to briefly describe RHP’s work to the audience and won some money for RHP. RHP also was a sponsor of Rayceen’s holiday mixer.
- On September 6, Chuck Goldfarb represented RHP at a social communication fair entitled “A Social Guide to (Older) Gay DC: Beyond the Bars,” organized by Seabury Resources for Aging and held at the HRC headquarters. Seabury is developing a program for LGBT seniors.
- Rob Berger, Richard Haight, and Chuck Goldfarb staffed an RHP table at DC Preservation League Community day on September 22.
- On August 5, Chuck Goldfarb attended the annual picnic of Best of Washington, the long standing African American LGBT social club, discussing RHP’s interest in collecting oral histories.
- On December 8, Chuck Goldfarb attended the holiday party fundraiser at HRC headquarters for Mary’s House for Older Adults, which is building a facility in Anacostia for LGBT seniors.
- Rainbow History Project received invitations to attend pre-release viewings of *A Fantastic Woman* and *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* at E-street Cinema.
- Photographs of many of our recent activities can be seen on the *RHP Photo Journal*: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/125018730@N06/sets/>.

PRIDE FESTIVALS

Rainbow History Project participated in Youth Pride, Trans Pride, Black Pride, Capital Pride, and NOVA Pride celebrations, which have always been the venues where we are able to meet the largest number of community members. Rob Berger spoke on behalf of Rainbow History Project at Youth Pride. Chuck Goldfarb and Michael Vanzant participated in the brunch for seniors at Black Pride. For the first time, RHP had a significant presence at Capital Trans Pride, with a large contingent of board members – including Nathan Avant, Jeff Gruber, Bryan Schwartz, Vincent Slatt, and Jeff Donahoe – staffing a booth that featured our continually updated Trans Timeline. Richard Haight photographed the event; his photos are available on the *RHP Photo Journal*. Keeping with long custom, RHP staffed a booth and interacted with a large number of other organizations and individuals at NOVA Pride, and had an extremely large presence at Capital Pride.

FUNDRAISING

- In 2018, RHP created a fundraising committee, chaired by Bryan Schwartz, to coordinate and rationalize our fundraising activities.
- Brother, Help Thyself continues to be RHP’s steadfast supporter. In 2018, BHT awarded us a \$790 grant from its Medford fund to create our own digitization lab. The grant money allowed Rainbow History to purchase different media playback devices, such as VHS and U-Matic, to digitize video donations that we receive. This was instrumental in allowing us to

digitize "One in Ten People," which was a spin-off show of Gay Fairfax. RHP promoted these digitization efforts at Capital Pride and NOVA Pride.

- On July 14, Coven Parties held a fundraising dance for Rainbow History Project at Ten Tigers Parlour, which raised \$510.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Rainbow History Project is an all-volunteer organization. Everything that we do is the result of volunteers providing their time and skills.

- In 2018 we created a document, Volunteering for the Rainbow History Project, to provide guidance to individuals interested in volunteering.
- All members of the board of directors are volunteers. In 2018, four individuals joined our board – Esther Hidalgo, Kate Ruane, Bryan Schwartz, and Tim Meagher.
- RHP made great strides updating our Word Press and Omeka webpages, email hosting, social media presence, and Internet Archive storage. The bulk of that work was performed by superstar volunteers Amanda and Jay Brite.
- As has been the case for more than 15 years, in 2018 Rainbow History Project again frequently turned to Philip Clark to help respond to requests we receive for historical information about DC's LGBT communities.