

**IT GETS  
BETTER<sup>®</sup>  
CANADA**

# ANNUAL REPORT

2019 - 2020

[itgetsbettercanada.org](http://itgetsbettercanada.org)



# THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

# FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For many of us, **connecting with our authentic self often requires a shake up from our norms and an openness to embrace new experiences.** As a closeted Muslim Iranian gay young adult, I had built ample barriers between my concept of comfort and my actual truth. Like many within the 2SLGBTQ+ community, I found myself coping by leaving my hometown of Ottawa and my family. I was set on pursuing new opportunities and experiences in a larger city and this was exactly what I found. But these experiences that helped guide my way, were not my own.

My move from the nation's capital to Toronto happened to coincide with the inaugural year of YouTube. As I found myself in a new city, friendless and with no connection to a community, I dived deep into others' shared experiences and stories of coming out.. These vulnerable videos became my friends, mentors and security blanket. I'd watch a young military US man express his fear about coming out to his Baptist family and saw my fears in disappointing my Muslim family. When I would see joyous coming out stories describing their newfound support, I began to root for them and long for the same journey. **These stories gave me the strength to know that I am not alone and ultimately helped me embrace who I am today.**

**connecting with our authentic self often requires a shake up from our norms and an openness to embrace new experiences.**

**Storytelling has the power to connect, inspire and educate us.** It has been just over ten years since the It Gets Better Project shared its first message, but the need

to continue to uplift 2SLGBTQ+ voices continues. As an affiliate of the It Gets Better Project and a registered Canadian charity, **It Gets Better Canada is proud to honour the 2SLGBTQ+ voices that enrich and define our nation.** Recognizing the power in sharing our unique stories is what drives our organization. That includes a commitment to seek out stories and create opportunities and experiences which elevate our 2SLGBTQ+ youth, and in particular, Indigenous, Black, Trans, and French speaking youth.

It Gets Better Canada continues to work with 2SLGBTQ+ youth communities across the country and leverage our platforms to elevate their vital voices and the reception has been phenomenal!

We are thrilled to showcase our first Annual Report. This report, while capturing a year limited in social gatherings, is rich in showcasing a range of queer 2SLGBTQ+ talent. We have commissioned a fantastic selection of artists, who you can learn more about further in our report, to create a beautiful offering of artistic visual narratives.

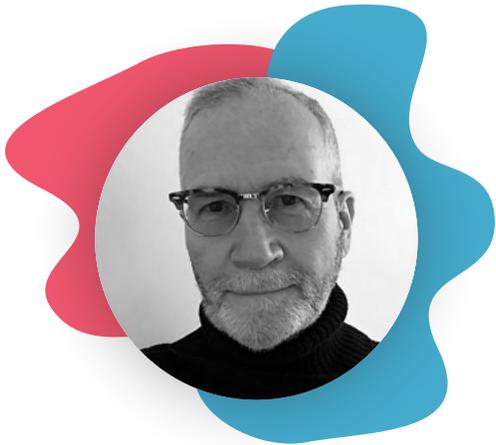
**With a lot more stories to tell, this is just the beginning!**



Omid Razavi (he/him)

**Executive Director  
It Gets Better Canada**

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Bruce Glawson** | Chair  
*(he/him)*



**Andrew Chang** | Treasurer  
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**Jill Dilts** | Secretary  
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**Noreen Mian**  
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**Dr. Rylie Moore**

*(he/him)*



**Victor Ryan**

*(he/him)*



**Sean Kavanagh-Lang**

*(he/him)*





# OUR MISSION

It Gets Better Canada is a registered charity in Canada that **envisions a world where all 2SLGBTQ+ youth are free to live equally and know their worthiness and power as individuals.** Its mission is to uplift, empower, and connect 2SLGBTQ+ youth across Canada.

It Gets Better Canada fulfills its mission to uplift, empower, and connect Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (2SLGBTQ+) youth across Canada in two ways:

**Storytelling.** It Gets Better Canada connects young 2SLGBTQ+ people with the global 2SLGBTQ+ community by providing access to an arsenal of uplifting and inspiring stories of hope, resilience, and determination, as told by members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and their allies.

**Building community.** It Gets Better Canada is dedicated towards building community by (a) working with government, NGOs and private sector organizations to develop and enhance tools and community-based resources that help 2SLGBTQ+ youth find positive solutions to the challenges they face, (b) engaging with young 2SLGBTQ+ people both on and offline, and (c) connecting them to community service providers that can provide local support.

# LOOKING BACK



## 2010

A viral video message which uttered three words “IT GETS BETTER”, gives rise to a global movement focused on the empowerment of 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

## 2011

The It Gets Better Global Affiliate Network launches, and now spans 4 continents.





# 2016

It Gets Better Canada becomes an official Global Affiliate Network member.



# 2019

It Get Better Canada becomes a registered charity

# 2018

#RightToBeYouCanada  
(Conversion Therapy Ban Campaign)



# 2020

StaySafeStayTrue Campaign  
Messages of support from prominent queer Canadians during the early stages of the pandemic

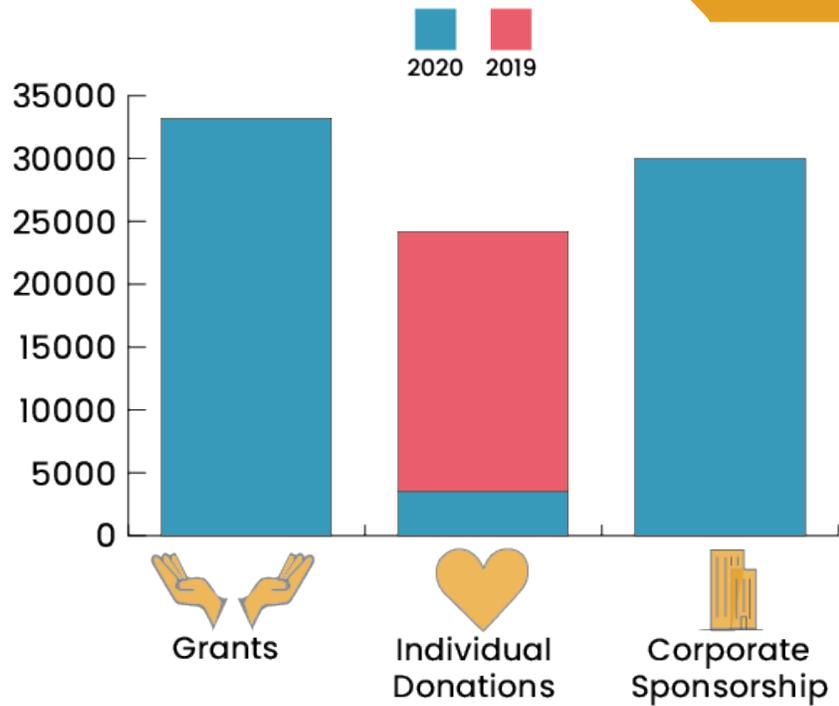


**We continue to uplift the 2SLGBTQ+ community!**

# FINANCIALS

## REVENUE

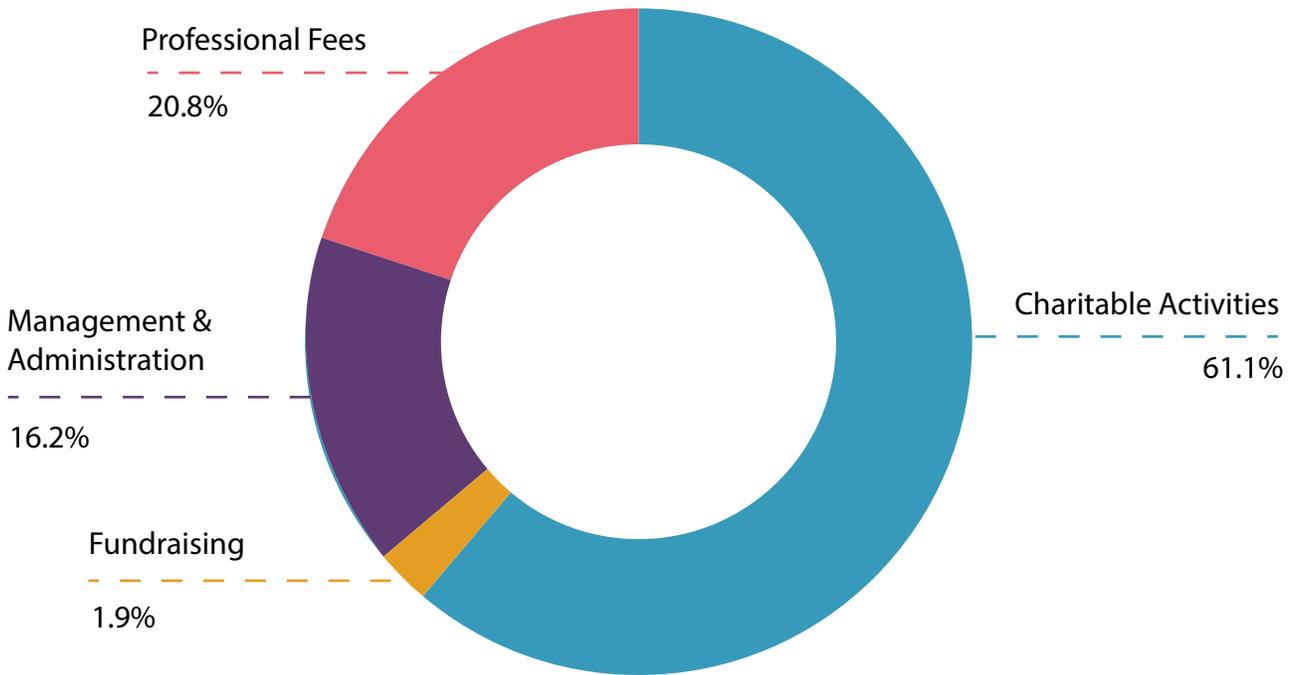
Please note that the fiscal 2019 comparative figures include IGB-CSA's operations prior to receiving registered charitable status on September 30, 2019.



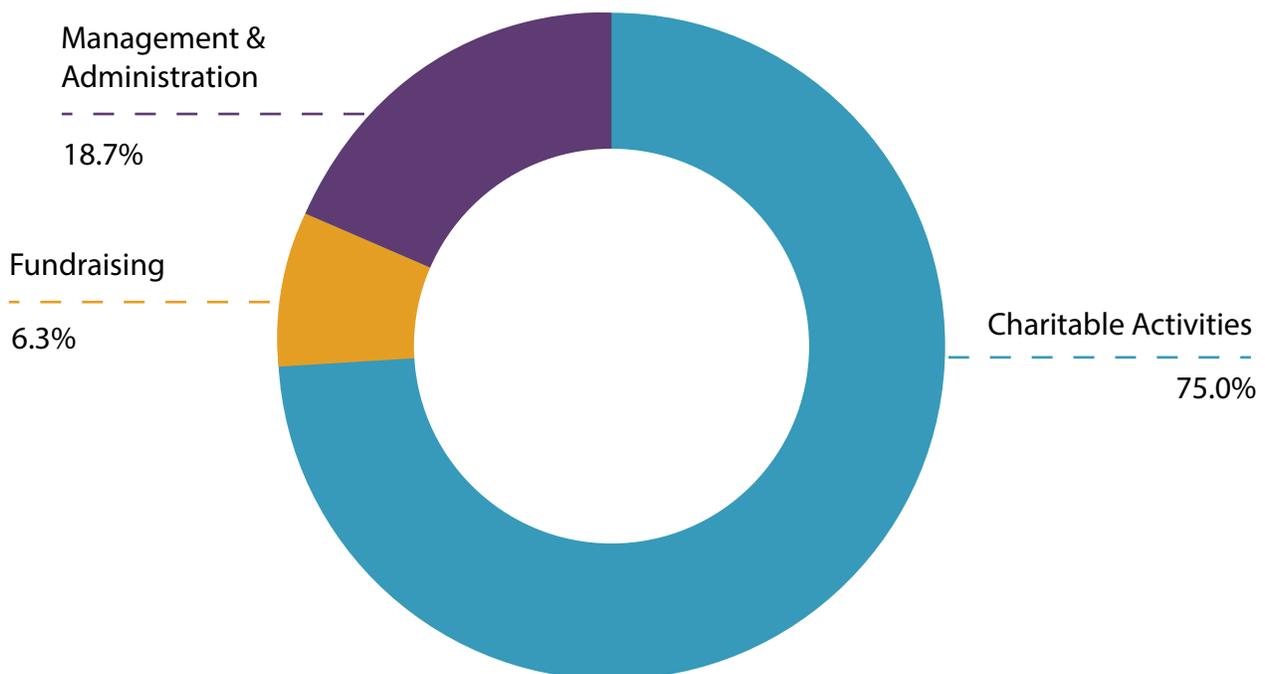
ELYAS SALAME

# EXPENSES

Apr - Dec 2020



Apr - Dec 2019



# COMMUNITY

**StaySafeStayTrue Campaign-** In the early months of the pandemic, 2SLGBTQ+ youth across the nation were learning how to cope during “queerantine”. In an effort to uplift youth struggling with their authentic self, during an elevated period of stress and disconnect from their chosen family, IGBC created a heartfelt series of inspirational videos, featuring notable Canadian queer voices including: Sook-Yin Lee, Harrison Browne, Brock McGillis and Tranna Wintour.



Liked by iamrebelwillofficial and others

itgetsbettercanada We are excited to showcase a new podcast series from @blackbricksound highlighting some fantastic #QueerTalent, beginning with Onyeka Oduh! All episode links can be found in our story highlights as they become available.

**Queer Talk Podcast series -** During Pride 2020, we promoted and broadcast an exciting new podcast series from Blackbrick Sound! **Queer Talk**, created by Diego Williams, a queer Latinx content creator, highlighted queer Toronto talent.



Liked by iamrebelwillofficial and others

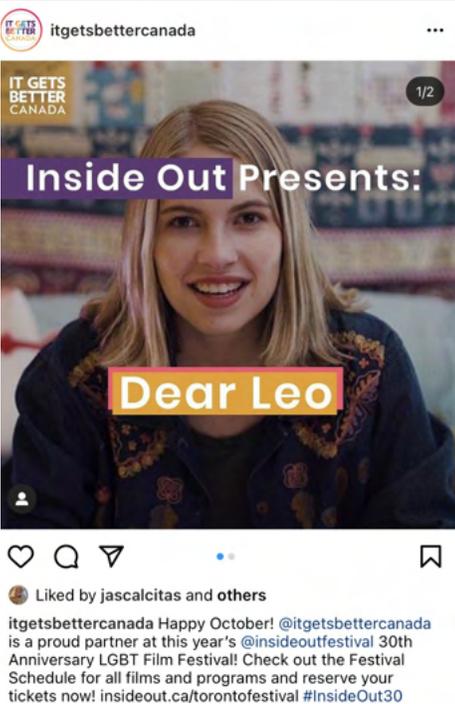
itgetsbettercanada In the fifth and final @blackbricksound #QueerTalkSeries podcast spotlight, tune in for a roundtable discussion about Queerness in Toronto's creative industry.

# COMMUNITY



## NYX Safe Space Sessions -

For National Coming Out Day, we teamed up with NYX Cosmetics Canada to host a Safe Session, encouraging youth to share their experiences and questions about coming out. The event featured notable panelists, including: Jackie Cox, Adam Lambert, Laruen Jauregui and Gigi Gorgeous!



**Inside Out** - It Gets Better Canada was proud to be part of the Community Partnership Program in honour of Inside Out's 30th Anniversary!

We were proud to raise awareness for the film Dear Leo. The film was produced by a crew who were all under the age of 25. Director Emma Rappold and co-writer/star Jill Young have burst onto the scene with their charming debut, proving that the future of queer cinema is in good hands.

# SUPPORTERS

We are proud to collaborate with organizations passionate about driving the 2SLGBTQ+ movement forward.



**Aon Canada** continued to shine its rainbow colours once again, during the 2019 Pride season by hosting seven fundraising events across Canada, with all proceeds going to It Gets Better Canada.

The global professional services provider hosted events in Calgary, Halifax, Montreal and Toronto, raising \$20,000.

At Aon, we believe that diversity, inclusiveness and a collaborative spirit are essential to a successful business...and to ensuring happy, healthy and thriving communities,” said Christine Lithgow, CEO of Aon Commercial Risk and Health Solutions, Canada. “These fundraisers are a great way to engage the insurance industry in a positive program that is making a difference,” noted Stéphane Lespérance, President of Aon Commercial Risk and Health, Canada, adding, “this is not an initiative, it’s part of our core values and DNA.”



For the month of June 2020, **Genuine Health** committed a portion of their sales to It Gets Better Canada, totaling \$5,000.





PROFESSIONAL MAKEUP

For Pride 2020, NYX Cosmetics Canada launched three limited edition products, of which \$25,000 from the proceeds of sales was contributed to It Gets Better Canada.

The campaign invited 2SLGBTQ+ influencers to share their definitions of Pride based on their unique experiences. Influencers spoke on the importance of togetherness and support, both from within and from outside of the community and concluded by sharing a message of empowerment with their audiences.



**ADAM LAMBERT** @adamlambert · 14h  
Today is #NationalComingOutDay 🏳️‍🌈 and I'm teaming up with @itgetsbetterCA & @NyxCosmetics to host a #SafeSession, encouraging youth to share their experiences and questions about #ComingOut 🏳️‍🌈. Learn more here [linktr.ee/itgetsbetterca...](https://linktr.ee/itgetsbetterca) #ProudAlliesForAll

NYX PROFESSIONAL MAKEUP IT GETS BETTER CANADA #ProudAlliesForAll  
0:01 10.6K views

Interested in supporting our mission to uplift, empower, and connect with Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth throughout the country?

Connect with us today at [info@itgetsbettercanada.org](mailto:info@itgetsbettercanada.org)

# FUTURE VISION

This past year, It Gets Better Canada has made a commitment to take steps beyond our successful storytelling approach to not only uplift the 2SLGBTQ+ youth, but to also **empower and offer our platform for the QTBIPOC community**. The reception has been tremendous and we have been able to successfully build collaborations with a diverse talent of youth across Canada. We've been collaborating with a growing list of talent to create diverse content for our platforms and share the stories that are important and authentic to them. The content ranges from podcasts, illustrations, video production, blog posts and social media content and strategy. This approach not only allows for financial and professional support for 2SLGBTQ+ youth but it also helps us stay true to our mission.

Our most recent endeavour has seen the rollout of our TikTok platform, which has proven to be incredibly successful for the Project in the US. We look forward to collaborating with more talents on a range of topics including: being queer, Trans and disabled, a closer look at the nuances of being Two-Spirit, identifying the intersectionality of being Black and queer, and much more.

In the works, we have a screening of the film "Fire Song" in partnership with We Matter, an Indigenous youth-led and nationally registered organization dedicated to Indigenous youth support. We're also planning collaborations in a variety of virtual events in an effort to connect with like-minded grassroots organizations across Canada.

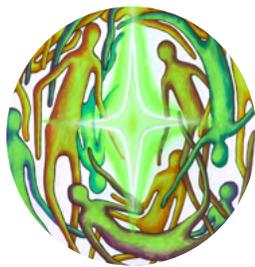


It is an exciting year for IGBC and the opportunities are just beginning!  
We are always looking for new talent and voices to work with and feature.

If you are interested in sharing your story connect with us today at:  
**[info@itgetsbettercanada.org](mailto:info@itgetsbettercanada.org)**

# FEATURED ARTISTS

**Gwen Hovey (she/her)** - Gwen Hovey is a Canadian illustrator, photographer, people-person, and eater of many desserts. Drawing and doodling from the time she could hold a pen, she loves to make colourful feel-good art reminding people of the things in life worth savouring, chasing, and fighting for.



**Naomhán (they/them)** - Naomhán is a 20 year old, two spirit multi media artist from the west coast of Canada. About their featured piece: “I made this piece with watercolours and coloured wax pencils. I wanted to portray the role that community and diversity takes in feeling empowered. Feeling empowered comes with feeling safe and supported enough to be yourself. I feel strongly that queer and trans people are a sacred and beautiful part of this world and we should all feel empowered by ourselves and by each other.”

**Onyeka Oduh (they/them)** - Onyeka Oduh is a Toronto-based queer, black, non-binary multidisciplinary artist whose work is an empyreal representation of how they see the world. Consistent themes in their work include coming of age, queerness, identity, and music as a shaper of stories and characters. they have had films at festivals in Canada and Europe, including Blood In The Snow Film Festival, Toronto Queer Film Festival, and TIFF Next Wave Film Festival. Their illustrative work has been featured on CBC Arts and as a part of CBC Toronto’s Proud to Shine campaign.



**Pree Rehal (they/them)** - Pree is an artist educator currently based in Tkaronto, originally from Tiohtià:ke. They’re a child of immigrant settlers from Punjab. Pree’s work centres their identity as a queer, non-binary, trans, disabled, fat, and racialized individual. They have an interdisciplinary arts practice under the name: Sticky Mangos and co-founded the Non-Binary Colour Collective. Pree’s work has been featured in CBC, Xtra magazine, BlogTo and Salty.

**Puppyteeth (he/him)** - Jaik Puppyteeth is a queer artist currently working out of Chinatown, Vancouver. He's risen to become a favorite in the drag community—he even created portraits of all the Drag Race girls for Canada's OUTtv last year.



**Elyas Salame (they/them)** - Elyas Salame is a Belgian-Lebanese Queer illustrator & designer based in Tiohtià:ke (Montreal). Their work focus on exploring queer identities through the lens of science under the artist name of Yas Petit Poulet.

It Gets Better Canada is an official member of the It Gets Better Project International Affiliate Network.

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This report was made possible with the support from It Gets Better Project, a non-profit organization working to uplift, empower, and connect 2SLGBTQ+ youth around the globe.



