

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
RAINBOW COALITION YOUTH CENTRE

October 20, 2016

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker the Rainbow Centre in Yellowknife offers important support to young people, especially those who identify themselves as queer, meaning gay, lesbian or bi-sexual, or who are questioning their gender or sexual identity. The centre offers programs by youth and for youth. The centre officially opened at the end of August with several of my colleagues in attendance along with our Member of Parliament and the Mayor Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, the Rainbow Youth Centre is open thanks to a small group of hard-working volunteers. Jacq Brasseur, Nicole Garbutt and Nancy MacNeil recognized that queer youth needed peer support. Together they founded It Gets Better Yellowknife five years ago. Earlier this year, they had a successful week of community-wide discussions around gender and sexual identity under the Days of Pink Banner.

Mr. Speaker, these passionate volunteers recognize that queer and trans youth needed a dedicated safe space of their own. They obtained funding from the GNWT Departments of Health and Social Services, MACA and the Health Authority to rent a space the size of a living room to make this dream a reality. Kudos to the government for making this funding available to the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife.

Most nights of the week volunteers offer programs that address a broad variety of issues from support groups to confidence-building activities, and from discussion about addictions to providing a place for the parents of queer youth to meet for support. And this is important: it's also a place to have fun. On average, 10 youth visit the centre each day. That's not all; these tireless volunteers provide outreach to the broader community in the form of workshops and training opportunities for government, business, non-profit, school and anyone else who wants them. They also provide consultations and support to other non-profits looking to make sure their programming is inclusive. Simply by being the Rainbow Youth Centre is a beacon of tolerance, acceptance and credibility within our community.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to congratulate the Rainbow Youth Centre for receiving the Territorial Youth Centre's Award of Excellence last month.

Mr. Speaker, when I was young and trying to understand my sexuality there was no Rainbow Centre to help. Having a Rainbow Centre in Yellowknife is a great accomplishment, not only for the youth who visit but for all of us. I offer the young people who established the centre and volunteer at it my warmest congratulations. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.