



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Faculty of Education

CAMP OUT!

A CAMP FOR
QUEER, TRANS AND
TWO-SPIRIT YOUTH



CAMPOUT! CASE FOR SUPPORT

Imagine a community where Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth can bring their whole selves, cultivate deeper self-awareness, cultivate their leadership skills, celebrate, and affirm courageous risk-taking, make friends, connect with the land, and have fun—all in a non-judgemental space of learning and growth.

In 2009, such a community was only a dream. But, thanks to generous donors and supporters, **CampOUT!** became a reality. This four-day youth leadership camp on Cha7élkwnech (Halkett Bay on Gambier Island) provides a camp experience where identities are accepted, wellness is supported, and leadership blossoms.

CampOUT! brings 2SLGBTQIA+ youth ages 14-21 together to learn from each other, cabin leaders (ages 19-25) and community mentors. Strong support from this intergenerational leadership team creates an environment that supports youth to take risks and explore their comfort zones through land-based activities, the arts, wellness practices and social justice learning. As a result, youth build leadership skills and gain self-esteem and independence while gaining new perspectives.

"I enjoyed being able to be open about my identity in ways I never have been before. There aren't any real queer spaces where I live, so being surrounded by others of trans experience was very refreshing." [camper]

CampOUT! is unique

The benefits of outdoor engagement and learning are well-studied and far-reaching, from reducing stress, fear, and anger to increasing joy and a sense of well-being and even improving brain function. **CampOUT!** makes this type of experience possible for youth who may not feel safe or inspired to attend other summer camps or queer and trans youth initiatives.

CampOUT! is an example of a successful University-Community Partnership. Since its inception, **CampOUT!** has been supported and directed by a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and the University of British Columbia. In and of itself, the CAC is a partnership between community leaders, local non-profit organizations, the British Columbia Teachers Federation and UBC faculty members. CAC oversees programming, camper selection and leadership training under the mentorship of the Camp Director. Through the Vice-President, Students portfolio and the Faculty of Education, the university provides an operational foundation and structure, some funding, and administrative and policy oversight. The program's ongoing success relies heavily upon support from the community and continued funding from donors.

These partnerships offer rich, rigorous and reciprocal relationships which strengthen **CampOUT!**. Unlike most other camps that require a fee to take part, thanks to the generosity of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, donors, and



sponsors, along with the University and community partnerships, the **CampOUT!** program demonstrates its commitment to equity for all youth by offering camp participation at no cost. Financial capacity is not a barrier to the student leadership program.

Following the UN rights for Indigenous Peoples, the UBC strategic plan, and the UBC Indigenous strategic plan, **CampOUT!** also fosters partnerships and builds relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities. **CampOUT!** explicitly recruits and welcomes Indigenous, racialized, and Two Spirit Campers, cabin leaders, and community mentors, offers culturally appropriate and supportive programming, and fosters dialogue among our communities and partners. **CampOUT!** exemplifies the University and Faculty of Education's commitments to anti-racism, Indigenous education, and inclusive education by offering financially accessible, relational, anti-racist, land-based, social justice education and recreation.

CampOUT! has Impact

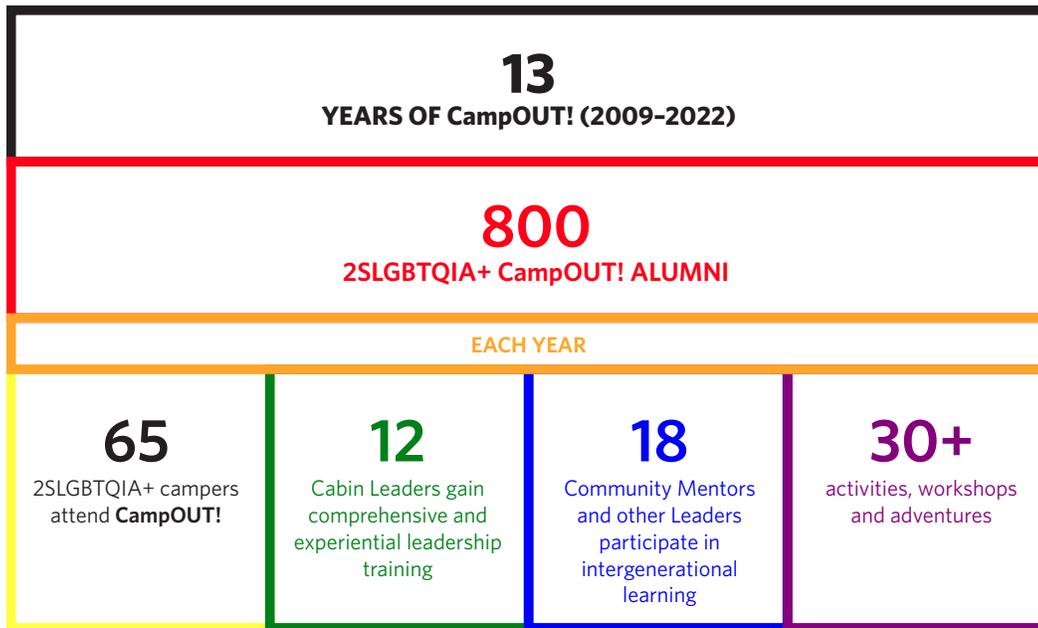
"I learned about how to take space and make space."

"I learned to be more confident with myself and learned how to make new friends."

"Camp has literally changed my life & made me the person I am. I'm grateful for the leadership development it's given me. It's given me most of myself, helped my career develop, and given me lifelong mentors."

The program works to ensure youth feel more connected and visible. **CampOUT!** creates meaningful social change by addressing the root problems faced by youth. An intergenerational leadership team is key to the sense of belonging that campers experience at **CampOUT!** The diversity of age, race, identity, and experience creates an opportunity for youth to connect with a variety of leaders and leadership models. Stereotypes about queer, trans, and Two-Spirit communities are broken down and openly discussed. **CampOUT!** offers a variety of activities and workshops ranging from camping standards such as canoeing and hiking to discussions on sexuality and Indigenous learning. Campers are encouraged to stretch themselves, learn from each other, and experience new ways of thinking and viewing themselves, others, and their communities. As a result, campers make positive connections that last well beyond camp.

Some campers become cabin leaders and community mentors; others continue the **CampOUT!** circle of intergenerational support by offering their expertise to **CampOUT!** in different capacities. Cabin leaders and campers have gone on to study at UBC and other universities. **CampOUT!** alumni are also leaders in local and provincial communities, take leadership roles in non-profit organizations, and are small business owners, teachers, scientists, and mental health professionals.



Give 2SLGBTQIA+ youth a space to learn and grow

Our donors, sponsors and partners are a mix of individual philanthropists, local businesses, past campers and their families, 2SLGBTQIA+ non-profit organizations, local businesses, United Churches, youth groups, community members and allies. Every dollar raised goes directly to the **CampOUT!** program throughout the year.

All donations of all levels are welcome, but specific amounts can help us achieve our goals, such as:

- \$10,000 fully supports 4 campers to attend **CampOUT!** Alternatively, \$10,000 covers the costs of our yearly three-day training on the camp site for cabin leaders. Such training sets the stage for a successful **CampOUT!** and enhances the programming quality.
- \$75,000 will help us conduct an impact study. We want and need to understand what has worked at **CampOUT!** over the last dozen years. This gift will wholly support or contribute to our ability to conduct an impact study to evaluate **CampOUT!** programs, which in turn, will allow us to attract additional supporters and funders
- \$100,000 will help us bring **CampOUT!** ideas and leadership models to others. Each year, we are asked to guide other organizations to run a locally directed camp for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. A gift of \$100,000 will support the creative people power to create a multimedia manual to help new camps get started and bring **CampOUT!**'s community-engaged work to other non-profit organizations and universities.
- \$150,000 covers our annual operating budget for our existing camp for one year!
- A gift of between \$1 million and \$3 million, endowed, will provide between \$40,000 and \$120,000 annually in perpetuity for us to continue to offer this program to support youth. Your generosity will ensure the program's sustainability and growth so that 22SLGBTQIA+ youth will enjoy this transformative summer experience now and for years to come.

*Your generous gifts to **CampOUT!** transform the lives of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in BC and the Yukon. Thank you.*