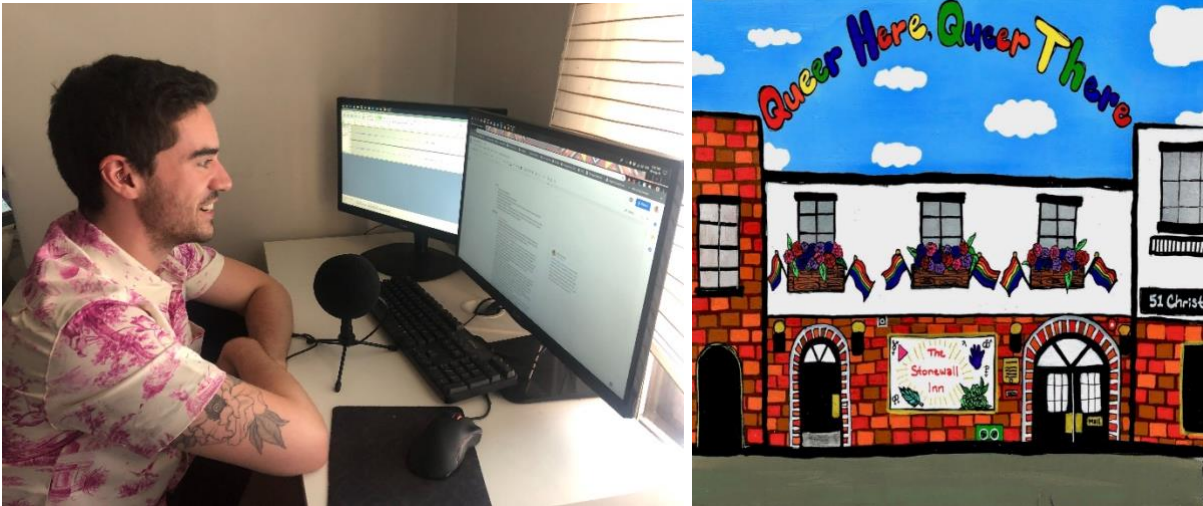




Community Engagement Initiative: Queer Here, Queer There

By Noah Powers, Social Connectedness Fellow 2019



Description

For my Community Engagement Initiative, I produced a podcast titled [Queer Here, Queer There](#) (QHQT), that investigated the intersection of queer space and many of the issues I encountered during my research. The goal of this project was to educate people of younger generations about the history and importance of queer spaces, as well as the threats to their existence. Many people do not know or understand the historical importance of queer spaces as sites of community building that have fostered belonging amongst queer people, hence the goal of this podcast was to raise awareness of this fact. This podcast was aimed at mainly queer people of my generation who are removed from queer history and heritage or who do not understand the role of queer spaces in fostering queer activism, activism that has provided us with the privileges we enjoy today.

“When I was young, there was in Berkeley, I think the very first sort of gay and lesbian agency in Northern California called the Pacific Center. I would go, Monday nights, they had meetings for gay men, and 100, 200 people would show up every Monday night. I made connections there that I still have, I have four, five, very close friends, whom I met in, in that context. People don't have that anymore. The phone apps, you know, as one example, don't really provide that opportunity.” – **Walt Odets**, author and practicing psychotherapist for over 30 years

Format:

I chose a podcast as I believe that this format is most accessible and would be the best way to broadcast the findings of my research to the community that I am researching as well as a broader audience more generally. The release dates (see table below) during Pride Month and Montreal Pride were chosen as they were the most relevant and the subject matter would be especially topical during these events.

Part	Episode	Title	Release Date	Episode Description from Website
0	0	Trailer	June 18, 2019	This is the trailer episode for Queer Here, Queer There, the new podcast that explores everything related to queer space. Subscribe to tune into the first episode, coming this week!
1	1	History of Montreal's Queer Spaces	June 25, 2019	For the first episode of Queer Here, Queer There, Noah dives into the history of queer spaces in Montreal. Tune in for the stories of how parks have played a vital role in Montreal's queer scene, of Montreal's two Stonewall-esque moments, and of the evolution of Montreal's three gay villages.
	2	The Future of Queer Spaces	July 3, 2019	In this episode of QHQT, Noah looks at the three main factors that are changing queer spaces: technology, gentrification and the rising societal acceptance of queer people. With input from experts Walt Odets and Andrew Londyn, Noah questions what the future of queer spaces will look like.
2	3	"The Epidemic of Gay Loneliness"	August 7, 2019	In this episode, Noah and his guest Georgia, discuss loneliness, social isolation, and mental health within the context of the lifelong process of coming out. Noah looks into strategies to combat isolation and improve mental health among queer people.
	4	Queer Heritage: Something Worth Saving?	August 13, 2019	In the last episode of Queer Here, Queer There, Noah uncovers the messy world of heritage preservation and who determines what gets to be saved. David Rayside, the former director of the Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto, and Ken Lustbader the co-director of the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, contribute decades of activist knowledge to the conversation.

Benefits and Reach:

This podcast benefited my research as it allowed me to broadcast my findings and conversations with experts to a wide audience. Further, as the topic of my research intertwines with queer activism quite heavily, this podcast aims to actively engage, inspire, and encourage a younger population of queer people of the importance of queer spaces, hopefully leading to a snowball effect of positive change. Notable successes include the relatively high-profile experts as guests on the show, as well as the [CBC article](#) written about the podcast and my research more generally. Overall, the podcast has a natural growth of around 20-40 downloads/listens per week across all platforms and has reached at the time of writing (Aug. 15, 2019), 400 downloads and 60 streams on Spotify.

"Coming up in the ranks as a grad student, where I was feeling alone and isolated researching this topic, it's wonderful to see that others are doing this research, and I hope Canada will look at their own sort of heritage definitions and expand it, where it can include LGBT history." – **Ken Lustbader**, co-director of the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project