



# REPORT

*From the office of the...*

**Coordinator MSU WGEN**

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TO:	Members of the Executive Board
FROM:	Nealob Kakar
SUBJECT:	MSU Women + Gender Equity Network Report 8 (FINAL REPORT)
DATE:	March 25, 2020

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## **YEARPLAN UPDATE**

WGEN held two full week educational campaigns this year, with three online campaigns, a resource campaign, an online giveaway, put on 5 standalone events, 4 support groups, and more than 5 collaborative events, while maintaining an open physical space from 10:30-6:30 most days where we gave out a multitude of resources. We would have had one more official campaign week to run, and our biggest in fact, if it was not for COVID-19. From March 23-March 27 we were planning to put on Making Waves, which is a week full of intersectional feminist-based events and programming where we were also going to bring 2 speakers to campus. Although this campaign week is not happening this year, we hope that next year's coordinator and team will follow the events, collaborations and speakers we have requested for next year, as we have put in so much work into the campaigns programming.

In looking back at my initial year plan, I have noticed that I have exceeded most of my goals and went beyond initial goals I didn't even know were tangible for this term, and it is very rewarding to see. Some of the goals that I wanted to achieve was to make the space more accessible, to gauge greater turn out, attain first year interest, and do more for the McMaster community and be more active in our social and political engagements, and I strongly believe that WGEN did that this year. WGEN was highly involved in the community, asked to be at many campus events for peer support, to provide training, be on panels, asked for more than 25 consultations this year and additionally we made about 6-8 statements online, and resource guides which aided with our online communication and awareness.

WGEN went above and beyond this year and it was due to the strong executive team of 9, the passionate 8 events committee members, and the supportive and resilient 30 safer space volunteers.

## **SERVICE USAGE**

### **Physical Space**

We have an average of 2-5 people that come in per shift, with many peak times with more folks that use the space in the afternoon as opposed to morning shifts. Additionally, we have had about 35 disclosures this year including in person, after hours and online. And I accompanied about 8 folks this year physically to figure out their next steps. Further, I noticed that during the summer we had a lot of folks reach out online for support in terms of disclosures and steps moving forward in attending McMaster and the support they would be able to get and for resources, particularly binder fittings were very popular. This year we have had a mixed

amount of usage in the space. I have noticed that we lack usage in the space during exam and mid term season, and have a surge of volunteers who also need more covers at this time, but I do get a lot of one on one peer support requests at this time, which makes sense due to the stress of school and other intersecting factors with this time of the year. In order to adequately analyze space usage, we have a system of intake forms that lead volunteers must fill out after their shift. But, since we have a lower amount of people that filled the intakes, we don't have the most accurate information, so for the future I would advise working on this system a little more to get more adequate responses. Additionally, the executives and volunteers have managed to keep the space open for majority of the time through accommodations and cover requests.

## **Resources**

After each shift that a volunteer does, they are required to fill out an intake form to debrief how the shift went and whether support was given, the content of discussions, and if resources were given as well. Although the completion of the intake form was not done to the best of its ability and many shifts were missed, we have a record of 166 responses, and of those we have a record of 12 binders being given out, 6 bras, and 62 menstrual products that were all given out during space hours. But of course, this is only the few documented ones, and additionally, many resources are taken after hours, and during tabling as well. This year we gave out about 20-25 binders per term (and counting), about 2-3 bras per term, about 5 packers in the last term, about 8 books have been signed out per term, and the entirety of our menstrual products have been taken as well as a lot of safer sex products. This year we got packers as a new resource for trans masc folks, and it has been very positive so far in the amount of messages we have received of folks wanting to take one. Additionally, I attained a lot of condoms, lube and internal condoms from the City of Hamilton public health center for resources. And we also got many makeup products, hair products and clothes donated to us to give out to folks in need, particularly trans folks as per our TRANSforming Mac campaign, clothing swap event.

Some challenges we have had with resources is with not having enough resources as we don't have the budget for it. A lot of folks have been needing sizes of binders that we have run out of, and in reaching out to our donors they have been difficult to contact. Additionally, almost all our menstrual products have run out and we were in need of buying more as our donors did not donate to us again. Overall, I believe that the resources that WGEN carried this year was very beneficial to the McMaster community as we had them used so much which brought new users, and folks continued to use WGEN as a form of support after attaining a resource. Additionally, our gender affirming resources is a detrimental part of WGEN as we have had external community members praise us for this and send folks in their community to reach out to us as a resource such as Speqtrum and Kyles Place.

## PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

### Campaigns

Our first campaign of the year was TRANSforming Mac. This was a week that was for Trans folks, and dedicated to creating workshops, social opportunities, resources and overall space for them to just exist on campus with the support of the WGEN community. The events that took place were as followed: Pronoun button making, makeup and hairstyling tips and tricks/tutorials with free makeup to give away, resources workshop, free headshot event, sex 1x3 (trans sex education workshop), a gender neutral clothing swap, a shopping trip to the mall, a trans BIPOC support group and a vigil and display for Trans Day of Remembrance. Overall, the week was super successful although we had our ups and downs in terms of rushing to do final last-minute details for the vigil, or not feeling as if our turnout wasn't the greatest for particular events. It was successful as we had folks come out to all the events, even if it was just three people it still benefited those few people and aided them in ways they needed. Additionally, we saw many new faces at our events and folks that were interested in learning more about the service which was great, this was in part due to the fact that we had many external folks share our promotions, and one of those was residence life which aided in getting first years to come out. Finally, one of the biggest successes this week was our clothing swap as we had about 30 or more attendees.

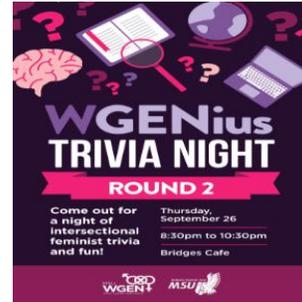


Our second campaign week was Bodies Are Dope which is a campaign created for the purpose of celebrating BIPOC and unapologetically celebrating and making space for racialized bodies. The main premise of the campaign is to demonstrate and navigate what body positivity looks like for racialized fat folks, BIPOC disabled folks and racialized LGBTQ+ folks. During this week we have partnered with services such as FCC, Diversity, as well as clubs such as McMaster Muslims for Peace and Justice as well as McMaster Womanists. During this week we kind of stepped outside of our comfort zone and utilized more facilities and services on campus, as we used the alumni house, the mindfulness center, MUSC atrium and more locations that served as very beneficial. We even had many folks reach out to us about how amazing the service is in person and online through messages. This campaign week was very successful as we had a lot of in person

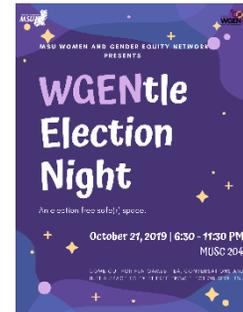
turnout, but more importantly we had a lot of engagement on social media which raised our following and interactions immensely. During this week we made an online campaign with a post per day about BIPOC, and we had a lot of community support such as folks from goodbody feel, local activists and public officials, and shares on Instagram and facebook.

## Stand Alone

For our opening event of the year we held WGENius, a night of feminist trivia. This event took place in Bridges, where my executives, the events volunteers and I made and presented an interactive trivia based on intersectional feminism through categories such as activism, pop culture, history etc. This event had about 8-12 folks show up, and then some of our own executives and volunteers on top of that, which is average in terms of turnout, and could have been improved much more. We believe that the timing of this event was an issue for turnout as many folks that wanted to come had a night class at this time. Other than this, this event was very beneficial as it served as a sort of introduction to WGEN and the new executive team and coordinator, and served as a promotion for our space opening, and the rest of the year. It was also successful as there were many new faces. During this event, my promotions executive, Stephanie took a lot of footage, and later made a video wrap up of the event that was posted on our socials that had a lot of engagement!



Next, we had our “WGENTle Election Night” event that took place in the WGEN space after hours. which was an event that happened during the night of the election results in our space in the evening. The event served as an election free safer space where we had games, snacks and light conversations as well as created a space where folks could just exist and feel safe in and gain further support if needed due to the stress and discomfort that the election causes on members of marginalized communities immensely. This event went very well as we created it very last minute as it was an idea that come up in conversation with the events committee a few nights before the event and we had about 7-8 folks show up in the evening which really benefitted them.



For Halloween we had our annual Spooptacular event, with this years edition: SWERF n’ TERF Lagoon of Terror. This event took place in IAHS where we had a Halloween movie screening in one room with the addition of Halloween and healthy snacks, the option to paint on pumpkins as well as decorate Halloween sugar cookies. In the next room we had a sort of Halloween haunted house that took place. The room was decorated to mimic a swamp and had informative spooky posters of SWERFs and TERFs up on the walls that created an opportunity for advocacy in a light and fun manner in which went with the theme of Halloween. This event was

implemented and created very successfully as we had the aid from the events committee and they really took charge and dedicated their time and energy towards their role. As noted, the events itself and the logistics went very smoothly, but the only thing that lacked was the event turnout itself as we did not have enough folks as we initially anticipated. We are mainly assuming the turnout was not as great was because we were located in IAHS on the third floor since it is pretty far from central campus and as it is getting older outside folks don’t want to trek out that far.



Next, one of the big projects that my team and I were very excited for this year, and that I planned on making a goal at the beginning of the year was the release of our “23 Q’s with WGEN” video. This video was created with the help of Connor and three of my execs who volunteered to be filmed. The video encapsulated what WGEN was and who we are in a very fun and creative way and again has created more awareness for the service

which is very beneficial, and was used for further initiatives throughout the year.

During exam season in first semester we ran a stand alone ongoing event that took place in the space called “WGEN Words of Wisdom”. This event consisted of folks dropping by WGEN and picking up a letter with encouraging words, and leaving one for a future student. The event was very successful as we had many new participants come out throughout the week and participate as well as engage in the space, and we were left with extra letters to give put to folks.



Further, we had our December 6<sup>th</sup> National Day of Remembrance and Action event that took place in partnership with many other university organizations. During this event WGEN was there to present past display boards of missing/murdered Indigenous women, as well as served as peer support volunteers during the event.



In January, we released an online giveaway that took place on our Facebook and our Instagram for the purpose of increasing online engagement and demonstrating appreciation to our volunteers and users within the community. During this period, we gained about 20+ followers on Instagram and Facebook and have seen an increase in all of our online engagements which is very beneficial as it aided for our future campaigns, projects and made folks aware of the support available to them.

For Black History Month, we created a project that was a call out where we would advertise and promote Black artists on our socials, as well as advertise their artwork within our space. We did not get much turnout for this event, but I hope next years team will implement this event again for BHM.



We held a pot painting and seed planting event in the WGEN space that was deemed



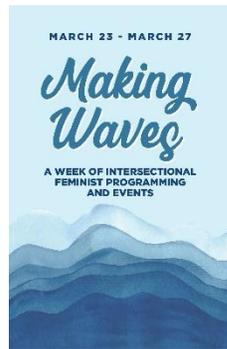
very successful by those in attendance and our Events and Logistics Coordinators that facilitated. We had over 25 people in attendance. Through local community partners we were able to attain seeds as well as soil from the McMaster greenhouse here on campus. This event was very important and beneficial for community building, and I believe we got the attendance we did because of the increase in followers we endured as result of the giveaway which is awesome!

On Valentines day we held an event in and outside of our space throughout the day based on platonic love, masculine love and queer love. Folks walked by the space and answered questions on a chalkboard and took a snack! The turnout for this was very good in person, but also our online engagement was very unexpected as we had many about 10 shares through Facebook and Instagram, when we didn't expect any at all!



Further, in the beginning of the year during Welcome Week we were asked to collaborate on a total of 8 events, as well as provide support during 4 events. Additionally, we were reached out to to table for external folks about 5 times per term!

### What couldn't go on because of COVID-19



One of the biggest campaign weeks we have been planning for a while now, Making Waves could not happen. During this week we planned on having two speakers, Moka Dawkins, as well as Robin Lacambra. In addition to the speakers, we were planning another Colors of pride support group, a BIWoC in Academic panel where folks from McMaster could share their experiences, an accountability workshop, a bonfire, a collaborative event with SACHA for survivors, a zine making event, an interactive art exhibit centering the experiences of survivors with FYC, and a reoccurring Black Book Club event with the womanists. The executive team and the events committee put in immense work into this week and we were called

its LIT. We were so excited to go out with a bang with our last set of events for the year, but unfortunately it was cancelled, and hopefully we can put these on next year!

Further, since the situation of the PCC, we were planning on putting on an event for 2SLGBTQ+ folks to find community and a safer space. We were going to put on a weekly movie night in the space for the last month of the term.



Last, during exam season the executives and me were going to put on "peers on wheels" which consist of a team of WGEN volunteers setting up at libraries for support if needed. We knew that during exam season more folks seek out support and could benefit from using WGEN so we thought it would be easier to readily make ourselves available. In addition to this, we were also going to open the space once or twice a week during the last 3 weeks of April for folks to use as a study space.

## Support groups



Our first support group that we have had ongoing for the past few years is survivors. This is a support group for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as intimate partner violence. It occurred biweekly throughout the year and we had about 15 folks that reached out to be on the email list, and a variety of folks would come out to the meetings based on the topic that was had that week and other variables. This support group was very successful and has been in the past years and is very beneficial to towards the McMaster community.

Black and Gendered is the second support group that occurred again this year. This is a support group for gender oppressed Black folks to heal, and share common experiences after hours within the space, and is run by our working group, The Womanists. This year we were unable to have the group run until second semester, but once it did run we had good turnout, and having this group was very beneficial as it carved out space for Black folks to take up on campus.



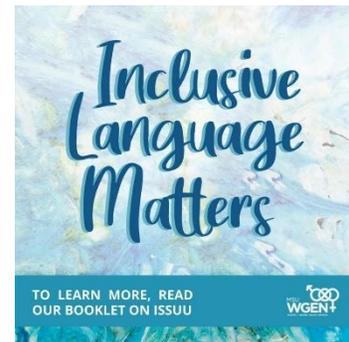
During our campaign weeks we also had a support group called “Colours of Pride” which was a support group for BIPOC LGBTQ+ folks. The first time we ran it we did not get much turn out as it was at a time that many folks had night class. But, we hope to put this on again next year more consistently as I do believe that there is a grave need for this sort of group on campus.



Lastly, we recently collaborated with Maccess for a support group called “Disability in Colour “ which is a group for BIPOC disabled folks to meet up and talk about mutual experiences, gain support and just be in a safer space with folks who have the same lived experiences as them. Unfortunately the last 2 sessions were cancelled due to COVID o we were unable to gauge attendance and usage.

## Infographic Campaign

One of our biggest success this year was our online infographic campaign/booklet on Inclusive language. This was a resource that folks could use on the ways they could practice accessibility in their everyday life, and covered a variety of topics, We created a QR code for folks to access the booklet, as well as many individualized posts that have been shared on our socials. This was a project that began with the research coordinator, Neha, and was created through the extensive collaboration of the SPA, promo and many other executives! This was very successful as we attained 58 Facebook shares on just ONE of the Facebook posts where the National Abortion Coalition of Canada shared, as well as many famous local public figures. On our other posts we also had an immense amount of shares, which was also increased when we posted it on Instagram.



**UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES**

The executives and I planned on ordering WGEN t shirts, as well as sweaters for the exec team. We put in our orders, but due to COVID it was stopped, which is unfortunate as the sweaters were part of volunteer appreciation. Additionally, I was planning on further appreciating the execs at the end of April through doing an activity, and also doing a pizza lunch for the volunteers to serve as further appreciation, and those all got halted. I am hoping that I am still able to attain some sort of appreciation in funds from the MSU as none of the executives have gotten their appreciation yet.

In terms of upcoming events, the SPA coordinator has been working on a body positivity campaign that centers fat phobia, anti-blackness and decolonizing self-care within the body positivity and feminist movement particularly. We hoped to launch this during our Making Waves campaign and will continue with launching it as it is online and will be accessible to folks from home. We are hoping to launch this in the next week on all our socials!

Additionally, the executives are in the midst of creating an online reproductive justice campaign through individual graphics with factual information that we can share on our socials that other folks are able to look at during this time. This will set to launch sometime in April!

As the new coordinator has been hired for the next term, all Yimeng and I have to do now is hire the executive team for next year. Since COVID-19 there has been a halt on a lot of things, and in particular with our hiring. We were unable to take our planned executive photos and send an intake for underground to get promotions. Further, we are now unable to meet in person with folks for the interview process which will be very hard, but we will try our best to use the technology available to us!

**BUDGET**

One of the biggest challenges I had this year was with the budget. Although it doesn't show in our tracking, that is because a lot of the spending in our promotions wasn't sent to me or made available for me to access from underground, so I had no idea what we were at. Additionally, I think that in doing 3 full campaign weeks, 4 support groups, providing online resources, and a huge amount of stand-alone events, things can get very expensive. This is particularly true in terms of how much promotional material costs at underground which really takes out a lot of our funding and doesn't make it possible for us to do the amount of groups/events that we would like to for the community. I was very worried in doing our last campaign week because this is where a lot of our funding goes as we have 2 speakers and many collaborative events with Hamilton organizations. I often also found myself spending my own money and executives spent their own money as opposed to WGENs, and we constantly had to make a numerous amount of budget cuts. In terms of the budget below it does not account for volunteer appreciation, two stand alone events and our making waves campaign that was going to happen.

<i>EXPENDITURE</i>				
<i>ACCOUNT CODE</i>	<i>ITEM</i>	<i>BUDGET / COST</i>	<i>PO SUBMITTED (DATE)</i>	<i>PO APPROVED</i>
5003-0308	WGEN - OFFICE SUPPLIES	50.00		
	WGEN Stickers	\$35.30		
		\$141.20		
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$176.50		
	REMAINING IN LINE	-\$126.50		

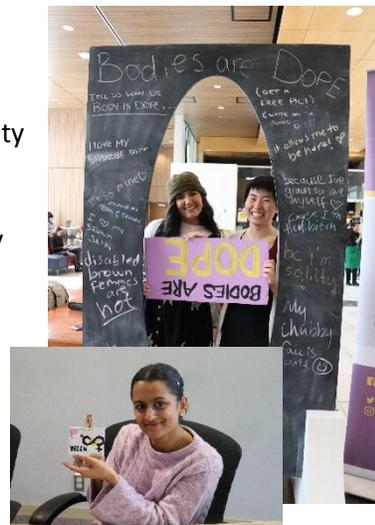
6102-0308	WGEN - ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS	2,800.00		
		\$333.35		
		\$329.40		
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$662.75		
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$2,137.25		
6103-0308	WGEN - SPECIAL PROJECTS	1,000.00		
	WGENius snacks	\$65.00		
	WGENius prizes	\$70.00		
	spoop decorations and snacks	\$120.00		
	paint event	\$23.00		
		\$33.86		
		\$84.75		
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$396.61		
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$603.39		
6494-0308	WGEN - VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION	750.00		
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$0.00		
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$750.00		
6501-0308	WGEN - ADV. & PROMOTION	1,850.00		
	Clubsfest Table	\$20.00		
	Hiring Graphics	\$150.00		
	WGENius round 2 promo	\$150.00		
	hiring docs from underground	\$14.00		
	Rave Cards	n/A		
	Spooptacular promo	\$75.00		
	door poster	\$200.00		
	Bodies Are Dope Promo	\$200.00		
		\$120.02		
		\$275.00		
		\$200.00		
		\$328.95		
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$1,732.97		
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$117.03		
6804-0308	WGEN - TRAINING EXPENSE	500.00		

		\$83.19		
		\$95.94		
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$179.13		
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$320.87		
<b>TOTALS</b>				
<b>TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING</b>			\$6,950.00	
<b>TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING</b>			\$3,147.96	
<b>REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING</b>			\$3,802.04	

## VOLUNTEERS

### Executives

Working with the executive team this year has been remarkable and one of the best experiences. The team consisted of 9 executives, with 2 new roles this year: Logistics Coordinator, and Research Coordinator who used to be apart of the Community and Events Planning Executives and the Social Political Advocacy executive. The team has worked so hard this year on creating constant content, supporting folks, and supporting me within my role. This job is really hard, and running this service places immense pressure on attempting to always do the right thing, prioritize the community at hand, and demonstrate and embrace support at the forefront, and the executive team made that possible. In order for the service to run, a team of 10 is really needed, as everyone has their own specific role that is unique to them and to the overall image of WGEN. I am very thankful for the hardworking team that I had the pleasure of working with this year!





### Safer Space

The safer space volunteers have really grown throughout the year and it has been very warming to see them thrive. Every year we always have a flux in the volunteers, as some folks drop mid term as many unexpected things come up, but I believe that we managed that very well this year thanks to the Volunteer Coordinator, Anna. Anna went out of her way to create a relationship with the volunteers that extended beyond just fulfilling a shift or a job, but that really exemplified the community of support that WGEN is for McMaster. In addition to Anna demonstrating quick and effective leadership, we had many volunteers that went out of their way to cover shifts when needed so the space stays open. In the future, I think I would request that the new coordinator overestimates even more and higher more volunteers than needed, anticipating that some may drop, because it is very likely.

### Events Committee

One of my goals this year was to amplify and work on the events committee. Being the Events coordinator last year we had a lot of issues with the committee's engagement throughout the year, where tasks weren't done and there was a lack of interest. This year I think that the events committee went above and beyond their role and showed active engagement through all of the events and really put their best foot forward. This is thanks to the Community and Events Planning Coordinators as well as the Logistics coordinator who worked alongside the committee throughout the year and lead them in the direction that was most beneficial for the success of the service and community at hand.



### CURRENT CHALLENGES

Some of the major challenges we have been having have been in terms of the underground and getting our promotions in a timely manner. And more importantly throughout the year I never knew what my standing budget was as underground never sent invoices or told me the prices of any package that was ever ordered so my budget line was completely off, and there has just been a lack of clear communication throughout the year that has been very challenging for me.

Further, we have had many issues throughout this year in terms of an on campus MSU club: McMaster Lifeline. This is a club that goes against our central mandate, that is bigoted and demonstrated harm to our service and many, many community members. The issues we have had this year with them pertains to their tabling in MUSC. Every time that they tabled community member that I have never even seen before sent a direct message to our Facebook, twitter and/or Instagram, as well as an email to the WGEN account explaining that they are tabling and are very harmful, and if we could make a post on our socials that they are here so that folks know to take an alternative route and to avoid them on campus if they can as they can be very triggering, harmful and just unsafe. We have made countless posts this year, directly because of community members requests to prioritize the safety of students. Additionally, my

executives and I have had multiple incidents with members from lifeline that have been harmful and draining, I have had to personally do individual peer supports in person and online after they have tabled to many folks that are in distress after the fact. It is just tiresome and draining to have to be constantly hyper aware of whether they are tabling and if we have to run to the space for support, or to post on all of our socials. Within our posts we have made throughout the year we have had immense support from community members through the amount of 17 shares and comments we have been getting, but also many bigots have been commenting on our posts creating an unsafe environment for our users.

Further, we have been facing challenges at the end of the term in terms of a huge amount of support that I had to handle on my own. This surge of support was due to the situation with the PCC, where a lot of folks that usually would go to their service for support were redirected to us. It is amazing that folks reached out to us for support but has been overwhelming and draining on myself. This leads me to an overall challenge this year of the PTM having a lack of clear support. The role of the PTM is there to support the safer space volunteers, event committee volunteers, the whole executive team and further the users of WGEN. In addition to these set out roles of support, I find that I have often been used for support by many identity based PTMs as well as they go through similar things. But, what I have found is that there has not really been a source of support for myself as a PTM which has contributed to constantly being overwhelmed and overworked this year. I think for the future there should be more clear and transparent support for PTMs of identity-based services given the work that they do, as every moment of this job requires an immense amount of energy, emotional support and can be triggering. This is also why I really advocate that WGEN has two co PTMs in the future years. One PTM for this service is just not enough as there is too much physical and emotional work that lies on one person. Being the PTM requires you to run a team of executives as well as safer space and events committee volunteers, run and manage the physical space every day, run events and campaigns, attend working group committee meetings weekly, run support groups given lived experiences, and moreover do one on one peer supports constantly, and deal with folks disclosing through email and having to work with them and support them in the ways they want whether that be through EIO or just general support. There is just too much work for one PTM. I really advise that in the future, the MSU could possibly have the conversation of having two PTMs to split the load as it would serve a further success for WGEN, the community and the future PTMs overall health and wellbeing.

## **SUCSESSES**

One of the goals we had this year was to create further accessible spaces, and to be more inclusive and mindful in our approaches this year, and I believe that we succeeded. We have added accessible captioning to our social posts, created further CW and TW at events, particularly at Spooptacular, added a big portion on accessibility during our training and made sure that the discussion of disability justice was had during our campaign weeks and approaches to event planning.

Further, a big success is that we increased our following and engagement on social media A LOT! Through the online campaign posts, the many online statements that we made throughout the year, community members from Hamilton interacting with us, our online giveaway, and just very good content, we have gained a ton of followers on Instagram and page likes and shares on Facebook. This has been very beneficial as it has aided in the outcome of our events and our space and resource usage and has made content more accessible. This surge in social media engagement has also made us quite popular within the Hamilton community which is beneficial as we are able to support more folks and serve a greater community.

A major success is the number of events we put on this year! We put on MORE THAN 25 events this year, where we anticipated in putting on more than 35 if it wasn't for COVID-19. In addition to the events we constantly put out new information on all our socials and stayed very active online. In addition to noticing all of the work ourselves, we have had a large amount of positive feedback where folks have been noticing all of the events and work that we have put in, and the space we have been creating for marginalized folks in the community, that we even had two folks reach out to us to donate to the service. We have seen so so many new faces this year both in person and online and have collaborated with more MSU groups this year than we have previously and have really been using the resources available to us.

Last, a big success has been the physical space. One of my goals at the beginning of my term was to revamp the space and implement further activities, fidgets, decorations, and interactive elements. This was done through many tiny initiatives that I put in place, such as an art wall, hanging the trans flag, adding cozy lights, creating a chalkboard table, creating an interactive quote wall and also an ongoing stress ball station courtesy of our Volunteer coordinator! I think these elements created a further safe, comforting and cozy environment that aided in the further use of the space.

Overall, I think that WGEN has done so much this year for the betterment of the McMaster community at large, and is a very beneficial service as it strives to carve out space and amplify voices of trans folk, of racialized folk, of survivors, of marginalized communities. It is a service that upholds a culture of support and care for one another through the actions of the executive team and volunteers. I am very thankful to have been a user, volunteer, executive and coordinator for this service.