

Muskoka Pride Community



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For Immediate Release

MUSKOKA PRIDE LAUNCHES “RURAL PRIDE STORIES” VIDEO SERIES

Residents are encouraged to create their own video about LGBTQ life in rural Ontario

BRACEBRIDGE, ONTARIO – July 4th, 2014 – Popular thinking says that it’s much easier to be openly gay in larger cities like Toronto than in smaller communities like Muskoka. Larger cities have more services and businesses that cater to the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community.

If that is true, then why is there such a large LGBTQ population in Muskoka and other rural Ontario communities? That is the question that Muskoka Pride wanted to explore

Muskoka Pride has launched a video series on its YouTube channel called “Rural Pride Stories” that asks LGBTQ Muskokans to talk about their experiences living, working, and growing up in rural Ontario. To launch the series, four videos were created, with more to come over the next several months.

In one video, Midland resident Jason Jones recounts an experience from high school, in which a classmate committed suicide because he was thought to be gay by others. “It was horrible. It certainly made me not want to tell anyone about my feelings that were coming out at that point,” Jason explains in his video.

Bracebridge resident Shawn Forth reflects on the unspoken rules of being an openly gay teacher – do not talk about your personal life at work. In his video he explains, “Living in a small town, it is difficult because you are in the public eye. I don’t want people to think that I’m ashamed of being gay, but I don’t want to be seen as pushing an agenda. Kids need to see role models of people living their life as LGBT.”

In their video, married couple John and Merv Taylor-Morin, discuss the differences in retired life between Ottawa and Muskoka. “I actually know more gay people here in Muskoka than I did in Ottawa,” explains Merv in the video that the couple made together.

Muskoka Pride will be recording more videos for this series at the 6th annual Muskoka Pride Picnic which is being held at Annie Williams Park in Bracebridge, on July 27th from noon to 4:00pm.

Residents of Muskoka – those who identify as LGBTQ as well as Allies (straight-identifying supporters) – are encouraged to create their own video about LGBTQ experiences living in rural Ontario. If you create a video, upload it to your favourite

video-streaming site (YouTube, Vimeo, among others) and email a link to muskokapride@gmail.com. Muskoka Pride will continue posting videos on Twitter and Facebook, and using the hashtag **#RuralPrideStories** .

To see the full series of videos, go to www.muskokapride.com/ruralpridestories or www.youtube.com/muskokapride

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About LGBT Pride Events – Pride events celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) culture. Most pride events occur annually and many take place around June to commemorate the Stonewall Riots in New York City on June 28, 1969. The first Pride march happened in 1970. Today Pride events are held in cities and towns all over the world. One of the largest and longest-running, Toronto Pride, happens at the end of June and is attended by over 1 million people.

About Muskoka Pride - The Muskoka Pride Community is a volunteer group that formed in 2009, whose purpose is to increase awareness of the LGBT community of Muskoka and to create opportunities for inclusivity within Muskoka that overcome heterosexism and homo/bi/trans-phobia, providing a safe community for LGBT people. The Muskoka Pride Community hosts the annual Muskoka Pride Picnic on the Sunday before the Civic Holiday weekend and Pride Week activities throughout Muskoka.

2014 Muskoka Pride Week Title Sponsors:



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