



Muskoka Pride Community



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For Immediate Release

RAINBOW PRIDE FLAGS PROUDLY FLY OVER MUSKOKA All Muskoka Communities Show Support for Diversity

MUSKOKA, ONTARIO – July 18th, 2016 – Once again, all of the communities in Muskoka have raised the Rainbow Pride flag in celebration of the Muskoka Pride Festival, which runs July 15 – 24.

The Townships of Muskoka Lakes, Georgian Bay, and Lake of Bays, and the towns of Huntsville, Bracebridge, and Gravenhurst all raised the flag again this year. This was the first year that Wahta Mohawk Territory has raised the Rainbow flag.

Starting the day off, Georgian Bay Township Mayor Larry Braid and Lake of Bays Mayor Bob Young proudly raised the Rainbow flag in Port Severn and Dwight respectively.

Muskoka Lakes Mayor Don Furniss commented on the role Muskoka Pride had in getting a flag holder installed. In 2014 Muskoka Pride spoke before Council and purchased the holder. Mayor Furniss recognized that this is the third year for a Rainbow Pride flag raising and mentioned that the Township has marked several other flag raisings as well with the flag holder.

Bracebridge Mayor Graydon Smith expressed his pleasure in raising the Rainbow Pride flag for the 6th consecutive year, to thunderous applause from almost 50 people who attended the ceremony. Mayor Smith thanked the Pride organizers for their time and dedication. He was thrilled to be raising the Rainbow flag “to celebrate, and be happy, and demonstrate inclusivity in our community.”

The Rainbow Flag symbolizes the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community with the different colours representing the diverse groups.

For Heather Hay, Chairperson of Muskoka Pride, the flag raisings are a symbol of acceptance of the LGBT population of Muskoka. “It says to the people in Muskoka that our community is diverse and inclusive, an important message for residents and visitors.”

Hay stressed the need for the flag raising’s visibility within Muskoka. “It’s important for young people to see it and know that they’re welcome in their own community.”

“It is significant that all communities of Muskoka are once again recognizing the

Muskoka Pride Festival this year,” says board member Shawn Forth, “because there are LGBTQ residents all over Muskoka, who want to feel supported by their town.”

Having grown up in Muskoka, he understands the feeling of isolation that comes with thinking you are alone. “Visibility is important for the LGBTQ community so that you don’t isolated. LGBTQ Pride is not just about tolerance and acceptance – it’s about celebrating the rich diversity in our community.”

The Muskoka Pride Festival continues with events all week throughout Muskoka. The week concludes on Sunday July 24th with the 8th annual Muskoka Pride Picnic at Annie Williams Park in Bracebridge from noon to 4pm. This year east coast singer Irish Mythen will be performing, and 2 same-sex couples will be celebrating their weddings as part of the Picnic.

For further information about all events, go to www.muskokapride.com or visit the Muskoka Pride Facebook Page www.facebook.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 LGBTQ 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.

2016 Muskoka Pride Festival Title Sponsors:



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