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BACKGROUNDER

Muskoka Pride

Muskoka Pride is a volunteer group that formed in 2009, whose purpose is to increase awareness of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (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 LGBTQ+ people.

Muskoka Pride hosts the annual Picnic on the Sunday before the Civic Holiday weekend and Pride activities in Muskoka. The committee was founded by Matt Commandant as a result of his experiences with LGBTQ+ youth at-risk of homelessness in Muskoka Region due to hetero-normativity and systemic homo/bi-/trans-phobia.

In October 2014, Muskoka Pride was officially incorporated under the name Muskoka Pride Community. We currently have 7 members on our Board of Directors, host a fall Conference, the Muskoka Queer Film Festival in the spring, and hold community social events throughout the year.

The Muskoka Pride Picnic and Pride Week

The Muskoka Pride Picnic was first held in 2009 in Gravenhurst with 26 people in attendance. In 2019 the Picnic was attended by over 1000 people, and included 9 days of events across Muskoka.

Muskoka Pride Week is an opportunity to ensure people of Muskoka are aware that there is an LGBTQ+ population. It is a chance to provide education and visibility, so that younger people in Muskoka know that they are not alone. Pride Week events provide a place to socialize and meet other members of the LGBTQ+ community.

What does LGBTQ+ stand for?

People often use LGBTQ+ to mean all of the communities included in the "LGBTQQIAA": Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-Spirit, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Ally, +Pansexual, +Agender, +Gender Queer, +Bigender, +Gender Variant, +Non-Binary

LGBTQ+ is the more commonly used term in the community; possibly because it is more user friendly! You may also hear the terms "Queer Community" or "Rainbow Community" used to describe LGBTQ+ people. This initialism and the various terms are always evolving so don't try to memorize the list. The most important thing is to be respectful and use the terms that people prefer.

The Rainbow Flag

The Rainbow Flag is one of the most-recognized symbols of the LGBTQ+ community. The different colours symbolize the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community, and the flag is used predominately at Pride events. Originally flown in 1978 with 8 colours, pink and turquoise were removed for production purposes. In addition to the symbolism of a diverse LGBTQ+ community, the colours also symbolize: red (life), orange (healing), yellow (sunlight), green (nature), blue (harmony), and purple/violet (spirit).

Newer versions of the Pride flag include the colours black and brown to represent queer people of colour, and the colours pink, white, and light blue to represent trans and gender-diverse community members.

LGBTQ+ Pride Events

Pride Weeks are events celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer(LGBTQ+) 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..

2020 Muskoka Pride Week

Muskoka Pride Week is being celebrated this year from July 18th to July 26th. This year is the 12th anniversary of Muskoka Pride. Virtual events and socially distanced in-person events are being planned throughout Muskoka over the nine days. Check our website www.muskokapride.com for full event listings.

July 18 – Muskoka Rainbow Road Tour starting at 12:30PM in Huntsville

July 18 - Drive-In Movie night Meetup at Muskoka Drive-In at dusk

July 19 – Virtual Pride church service with Port Carling & Bala United Church 10:00AM

July 20 & 21 – The Rainbow Pride Flag is being raised in all 6 municipalities of Muskoka and Wahta MT

July 21 – Driveway Drag Show (time and location to be announced) 7PM

July 22 – Take-out Dinner meetup and Tailgate Party in Bracebridge – 6:30PM

July 23 – Mini-Golf Tournament in Bracebridge 2PM – 7PM

July 23 – Driveway Drag Show (time and location to be announced) 7PM

July 24 – Virtual performance of The Laramie Project online via Facebook - 7PM

July 25 – Muskoka Queer Film Festival – Pride Edition online via Facebook - 7PM

July 26 – Muskoka Rainbow Road Tour starting at 12:30PM in Bracebridge

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