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For Immediate Release

MUSKOKA PRIDE ANNOUNCES MUSKOKA'S FIRST PRIDE PARADE

MUSKOKA, ONTARIO – June 11, 2018 – Muskoka Pride is pleased to announce that for this year's Muskoka Pride Festival they will be holding Muskoka's first-ever Pride Parade, as part of the celebration of their 10th anniversary.

The **2018 Pride Festival** will run from **July 20 through 29**, with events across Muskoka. This year Muskoka Pride is celebrating 10 years of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) visibility in Muskoka. The first Picnic was held in 2009.

According to Muskoka Pride board member, Shawn Forth, this year's Festival will be reaching out to communities across Muskoka and featuring several changes. "For our 10th anniversary we wanted to hold as many events as we could throughout the many communities of Muskoka. We also wanted to try new things to keep the events fresh."

The theme for this year's Festival is "**Bringing Pride To You.**" Events are being scheduled in multiple communities throughout Muskoka. The goal is to help Muskoka's diverse LGBTQ population and Allies to create inclusive spaces in their own community.

One of the biggest changes involves moving the signature Muskoka Pride Picnic from its long-time home in Annie Williams Park. For this year, the Picnic will be held in downtown Bracebridge at Memorial Park on Sunday July 29th.

The second big change is the announcement of Muskoka's first Pride Parade, also on Sunday July 29th, which will lead directly into the Picnic. Forth explains, "We've been asked year after year when we'll have a parade, and the 10th anniversary felt like the time to do it. We'll be following the same route used for the Remembrance Day parade, going from the Arena, onto Anne Street, then down Manitoba Street to Memorial Park."

The full schedule of events will be announced later in June. You can view updates on Muskoka Pride's social media accounts and website.

If your business or organization would like to take part in the Muskoka Pride Festival – as a vendor or information booth at the Kickoff or Picnic, or by walking in the Parade – the links to register are available at www.muskokapride.com

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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.

About Muskoka Pride - Muskoka Pride 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. Muskoka Pride hosts the annual Muskoka Pride Picnic on the Sunday before the Civic Holiday weekend and Pride Week activities throughout Muskoka. A conference is held each fall, and regular social events happen throughout the year.