

In addition to my role as Secretary, I am also responsible for all Muskoka Pride social media accounts, the Muskoka Pride website, coordinating details of the Pride Week, monthly social events, the monthly Youth Group, all grant writing, overseeing the grant reporting, and the media spokesperson for Muskoka Pride.

Our social media accounts have continued to be active throughout the year, adding followers and responding to inquiries. Across our 3 accounts (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) we have over 7000 followers!

Muskoka Pride had a very successful Pride Week, with the return of our Festival in Memorial Park and the Parade down Manitoba Street. We continue to build partnerships with groups in the community – Huntsville Theatre Company, TimberBeast Productions, Bracebridge & Trinity United Churches, Away We Go Trips, Bracebridge Hall, the 6 Mile Lake Cottagers Association – to name just a few. It is because of these partnerships that we were able to host such a diverse week of Pride events.

Last fall we stopped our monthly coffee socials due to declining numbers. It would be fabulous to get the monthly social events going again, but only if someone else is able to take on the coordination of them. They were a chance for regular community visibility, and an opportunity for those new to the area to meet members of the queer community.

The Youth Group is held on the second Friday of each month, here at the Bracebridge United Church. We regularly have between 6-12 participants. Last fall, PFLAG Muskoka also began holding their monthly meeting at the same time, providing an opportunity for parents and family members to build community and support. Both groups continue to meet monthly with consistent attendance.

Muskoka Pride was extremely proud to partner with YWCA Muskoka for the rebranded “Walk A Mile in Their Shoes” fundraiser. The portion of funds raised that go to Muskoka Pride are directed to programs supporting Muskoka’s LGBTQ+ youth – the monthly Youth Group, supporting PFLAG Muskoka, and supporting the high school and elementary GSA clubs. We were able to spend and distribute approximately \$6500 last year through the WAM funds.

Muskoka Pride was successful with 3 grants last year – the Heritage Canada “Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage” grant immensely helps us during the annual Pride Week. The Bracebridge Event Tourism Grant allowed us to try some new programming at the Festival. We were successful with 2 different grants from the District of Muskoka IDEA committee – supporting MQFF and the “Hate Has No Home Here” signage. We were also successful with 2 grants through Fierste Canada Pride. The Rural and Remote Communities grant was used for updating our brochures and other improved signage, and for the creation of anti-protest kits (whistles, signs, banners). The Community Safety grant was used for costs associated with the Festival and Parade (radios and traffic signage). Overall, it was a successful year for grants, and I’ve already completed applications for 2 grants for next year.

This year was a challenging year for liaising with the media. A lot of time was spent helping some of the local media to navigate through the misinformation surrounding the recent anti-2SLGBTQ+ protests. Muskoka has been hit hard recently with the loss of the weekly newspaper distribution, and Facebook blocking national and local media from posting on its platform. Local non-profits such as Muskoka Pride rely on the local media to help bring attention to our community events. We have built up many positive relationships with local media, and as such we are often called upon by local journalists to add a queer voice to media stories.

It has been an absolute pleasure and a wonderful challenge to serve Muskoka Pride in these roles.

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