

Pflag Durham Region

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Township of Brock
1 Cameron Street E.
Cannington, ON L0E 1E0
Via: Email through the Clerk, Mayor and Councillors

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

We are writing on behalf of Pflag Durham Region a chapter of Pflag Canada.

Pflag Durham Region is a non-profit, 100% volunteer organization that supports all persons within our reach of the Durham region, on their journeys through gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. We seek to provide education and resources to the greater Durham community to help encourage inclusion, diversity and equity.

Within the scope of our work, we ongoingly support visibility. Visibility is very important for the 2SLGBTQI community, for those who are openly authentic and to those who are still not able to be themselves openly.

Each year in June, Pride month is celebrated. During this time, you will see rainbow symbols to represent the Pride community abundantly displayed on flag poles, buildings, and apparel.

Historically, this has been limited to major metropolitan areas and in some smaller towns during Pride month. For members of the 2SLGBTQI community, seeing visible encouragement and representation of queer identities is extremely important. Members of our local community are still shunned, classified as having mental disorders, and face individual and systemic homophobia and transphobia, in their homes and in society.

When there is diverse representation of 2SLGBTQI people included in media, organizations, and in general public areas, society as a whole is able to gain a wider perspective and this will strengthen the entire local community to be more inclusive. Communities will have the opportunity to embrace a full visible spectrum of unique and diverse identities, just as we see represented so colourfully during Pride Month. This will also help support a shift in social consciousness to include people from a range of different backgrounds.

Positive and healthy affirmation for one's existence is a key to 2SLGBTQI peoples well-being. Feeling affirmed about your own identity, and witnessing positive role models in the world around you, boosts self-esteem which is especially important to those still developing their sense of self. When representation is lacking, it sends the message that one's identity is invisible, doesn't exist, and isn't important. This can bring about consequences of feeling invisible and unsupported.

Research consistently finds that depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts are significantly higher for 2SLGBTQI youth than among the general population. This is not because they identify in the community, but because of what society voice gives them about their identity. Recently, Egale Canada recently released new research data showing that of approximately 39% of 3500 youth (14-24 yrs. old) who engaged in the research identified somewhere on the 2SLGBTQI spectrum. This is our future

Role models and visual representations are vital for all minority communities. Without diverse and inclusive representation and acknowledgement, there is a substantial risk of reinforcing and maintaining systemic stereotypes and erasure due to a lack of visible authentic identities and full community representation.

Pflag Durham Region is seeking the Township of Brock to engage with us to bring visibility to North Durham. We are asking all the members of Council to be part of the change and support the representation of the 2SLGBTQI community that exists in our northern communities.

Pflag Durham Region will produce a minimum of 6 Pride banners for the light standards on the main streets. Starting at the entry into of each of Cannington, Beaverton, and Sunderland. These banners will display the new Pride (Progress) Flag along with a positive message. We ask that Township engage by being responsible for mounting these banners on the light standards. Our minimum ask would for the banners to be up from June 1st- June 30th each year. We would also ask that the Township engage in supporting social media and community education with support from Pflag Durham Region as to why these banners are important work for inclusion.

Residents and visitors to our towns will recognize the symbolism of the Pride Flag and this will indicate that the Township of Brock is a welcoming community. It sends a message in the simplest language possible, the rainbow, that ours is an inclusive place to visit and live and it

offers the 2SLGBTQI youth that the Township of Brock sees them and wants to supports them to be their authentic self, every day.

We are asking Township of Scugog and Uxbridge to also in participate, so this will truly show that North Durham is not just talking about showing inclusion, but living it.

We hope that you will support and embrace this positive affirming inclusive ask from Pflag Durham Region. All details and specifications will be workable with Township staff once this Council puts forth the motion to engage in this important work.

We look forward to seeing our Northern Pride being visible in June 2022 and for all the years beyond!

Thank you to all of you who were part of the crosswalks being painted a few years back. In the words of late Brock Township Mayor Debbie Bath-Hadden. "It's only paint, but it's important paint!".

These are just banners, but they are important banners!!

Jake Farr MSW, RSW #829835

Jake Farr (He/They) MSW, RSW

President, Pflag Durham Region

Alison Bennie (She/Her), Board of Directors – North Durham Representee and co-lead

Alicia Hogan (She/Her), Co -Lead- Pflag North Durham Team

