



Lakehead Elementary Teachers of Ontario

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**1st Annual
THUNDER PRIDE
Draft Proposal
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When it comes to diversity and lesbian and gay rights, Thunder Bay has come of age. In 2007, the City of Thunder Bay signed on to Canada's Federal Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination. A growing network of community, academic, health and social service groups continues to come together on issues of human rights including the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and two-spirited peoples. Starting in 2003, when an Ontario Human Rights Complaint about homophobia in schools garnered headlines, Thunder Bay's public support of LGTB rights has continued to grow. This was no more in evidence than one year ago when over 1,300 people rallied at a local event and a further 8,500 on-line members signed on to support a man who was the victim of gay-bashing.

THUNDER PRIDE - Proposed Goals

THUNDER PRIDE would be an annual community celebration of LGBT and diversity rights- the first civic Pride Week to be held in Northwestern Ontario. Its proposed goals would be to:

- Celebrate the history, courage, diversity and future of Thunder Bay's LGBT community.
- Provide support, encouragement and education to Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgendered and Two-Spirited People, family and friends.
- Work with community groups, academic and other organizations to develop programming, initiatives and events dedicated to reducing homophobia- during THUNDER PRIDE and throughout the year.
- Build a pre-eminent arts and cultural celebration for the City of Thunder Bay, its residents and the surrounding region

The best pride weeks are those that involve and attract the whole community. Thunder Pride has the potential to be a community event that honours and celebrates the diversity of Thunder Bay and provides safe spaces for everyone. Outreach efforts would be undertaken to attract Pride Week visitors from outlying areas in the Northwest and from the U.S.

Proposed Timing

Proposed timing for Thunder Pride 2011 would be the week of June 6- 11, 2011. Elementary and high school students will still be in school, allowing for potential activities by GSAs. The weather at that time would support outdoor activities. This timing avoids other civic pride weeks such as Toronto (late June), Hamilton (possibly June 16-19).

Proposed Core Activities

The number and scope of activities would depend on two things: the amount of sponsorship funds that can be raised; and the degree of volunteerism offered in organizing and carrying out activities. One thing is certain: having activities over 4-5 days or a week will offer more exposure for the LGBTQ community, the city, and potential sponsors.

FILM FESTIVAL: Mon June 6 – Wed June 8

- Could approach Toronto's Inside Out Festival to see if they would provide films
- Would need to book a local theatre or auditorium for showings
- Contact Sexuality and Gender Equity (S.A.G.E.) and ask if they would like to reprise their LGBT film festival of February 2011 or have new films

CANDLELIGHT EVENING OF HEALING –Thurs Jun 9

- A memorial to loved ones who have died of AIDS, others who have faced discrimination, or been gay-bashed
- Include a Two-Spirit ceremony
- Have musicians, poets and others perform

THUNDER PRIDE CONCERT –Friday June 10

- A music concert with local and national/international artists
- Waverly Park would be an appropriate venue
- Offer booth space to community groups, sponsors and vendors
- Arrange post-performance events with several pubs including an open mike, DJ Dance Bar and drag show so people can pub-crawl

THUNDER PRIDE FAMILY PICNIC—Saturday June 11

- Rather than a Pride Parade, why not a family picnic that everyone can come to?
- Feature local music and other arts
- Hold at Waverley Park- offer booth space to community groups, sponsors and vendors
- By having the concert and picnic at Waverley Park, all arrangements for permit, insurance, security, washrooms, and emergency health assistance could cover a 24 hour period.

BREAKFAST TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE EFFECTS OF HOMOPHOBIA ON OUR YOUTH- Wed June 9

- GSA involvement
- Report from Lakehead Public Schools of their initiatives
- Community groups, politicians, citizens invited
- Key note speakers

OTHER IDEAS FOR EVENTS/INITIATIVES

SCHOOL EVENTS

- Have GSAs present performances such as ***Get Yourself Home Skyler James***. It's a thirty minute dramatic monologue based on the true story of a small town teenager from Texas who graduates from high school, innocently joins the American military and then is forced to flee to Canada in the face of violent threats around her sexual orientation. The play is based on a true story. A local actor could be sourced to perform the play.
- There are two studies on LGBT issues in schools. EGALÉ began its National Climate Survey on Homophobia in Canadian Schools in Thunder Bay. As well, there is other research going on that is centred on Lakehead schools. If any updates are available, plan a media conference during the week to highlight results.

ART SHOW- For the week

- Get a public space such as the library or city hall and curate an art show featuring LGTBQ artists
- Ask a local gallery person to curate the show

THEATRE PRODUCTION

- Have the local Cambrian Players reprise their production of The Laremie Project, which they performed this February.

HAVE THE CITY DESIGNATE PRIDE WEEK

- Once plans are in place and the city can see that this is a good cultural event, have the city pass a proclamation for THUNDER PRIDE Week.
- Have a sponsor produce local rainbow flag standards to post around the city.

Process and Organization

This is a significant undertaking. It will require the participation of various groups to do the legwork to organize various elements. Once there is agreement among local groups to support a Thunder Pride event, planning can get underway. Ideally, a local community group and/or individuals would take responsibility for coordinating a specific event. A steering group would then meet monthly to ensure the events are coordinated and budgeted and conformed with the goals and principles articulated in this document.

The task will then be to get the city and corporate sponsors on-board to provide funding marquee events.

Sponsorship Possibilities

For sponsors, having several days of activities and attracting lots of people to activities, will make it worth their while to participate. It allows us to have sponsor boards made and exhibited at every event, which creates more exposure for sponsors.

LGBTQ activists from ETFO in Toronto are willing to assist the Thunder Bay group to develop a sponsorship package and pursue potential sponsors that have been supportive of other pride weeks. As well, they are willing to see if Pride Toronto will twin \

with the THUNDER PRIDE inaugural week to help boost its profile, and approach EGALE, Queer Ontario, PFLAG and others to endorse the event.

The sponsor package could include several levels of sponsorship such as Marquee, Official and Contributing Sponsors. Potential sponsors could include:

- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
- Other local unions and the District Labour Council
- TD Canada Trust
- Beer and wine companies
- Suppliers like TBayTel, Shaw Cable
- Those who market to LGBTQ community
- Local retail businesses
- Hotels and entertainment venues