



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

2008 Pride Celebrations

Date:	August 25, 2008
To:	Advisory Committee on Long-Term Care Homes and Services
From:	General Manager, Long-Term Care Homes and Services
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This year, the City of Toronto marked the 28th annual Pride Week with celebrations and festivities that were heralded the world over. In his proclamation of Pride Week, Mayor David Miller noted that “Toronto’s strong, vibrant and proud queer community plays an important part in the rich fabric of our diversity”. This richness and strength was clearly evident throughout the many special events and venues that were celebrated throughout the week-long festivities across the city and culminating in the Pride Parade on Sunday, June 29, 2008.

The theme of this year’s Pride Week was Unified, which enthusiastically symbolizes and reflects the significant achievements and accomplishments that have been collectively achieved within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities, not only here in Toronto, but across the country.

In 2008, Toronto Long-Term Care Homes and Services continued in the tradition of celebrating Pride Week with the City. This included special Pre-Pride celebrations at Fudger House, Kipling Acres and True Davidson Acres and the much anticipated participation in the Pride Parade by all three (3) homes. Given the responses by many of the residents, family, friends, volunteers and staff of this year’s celebrations at either the Pre-Pride celebrations or at the Pride Parade itself, Toronto Long-Term Care Homes and Services has solidly established a tradition of celebrating Pride along with the City of Toronto.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In 2004, Toronto Long-Term Care Homes and Services became aware of the disparity in service provisions provided to LGBT seniors who may themselves require the programs and services offered through a long-term care home. As a result, the division recognized an unmet community need and seized the opportunity for the division to establish LGBT positive, welcoming and inclusive communities within the homes and respond to the significant gap in service provision. Through this experience, the division heightened awareness regarding the importance and significance that Pride plays within the LGBT community. As a result, the division became involved in the special tradition of celebrating Pride in the City. Since that time, the division's involvement and festivities in celebrating Pride have continued to grow and flourish.

This report provides a summary of the special events and celebrations that Toronto Long-Term Care Homes and Services participated in this year in celebrating Pride.

At Fudger House, Toronto City Councillors Pam McConnell (Ward 28 Toronto Centre-Rosedale) and Kyle Rae (Ward 27 Toronto Centre-Rosedale) attended along with approximately eighty (80) residents, family, friends, volunteers and staff at the June 24th Pre-Pride Flag Raising and Garden BBQ.

This was a particular festive celebration as the event also marked the one-year anniversary of the Molly Wood Senior Social Club, which is a group of LGBT residents and friends who have formed a cohesive and supportive social group at Fudger House. The formation and support to Molly Wood is heralded as a special achievement, as it reflects one of the many notable accomplishments resulting from the work of the division's LGBT Steering Committee.

Kipling Acres celebrated a Pre-Pride Flag Raising Celebration on June 20th with approximately seventy-five (75) participants coming together to raise the rainbow flag and enjoy the festivities of the day. It is especially poignant to note that this year's Flag Raising Ceremonies was coordinated by one of the home's Advisory Committee members, who also acted as master of ceremonies for the event. In addition, this celebration was enhanced with youngsters from the Kipling Child Care Centre joining in on the festivities.

Kipling Acres also hosted a Pride Week Display which was located in the front lobby of the home, where many residents, family members, visitors and staff stopped by to view the display. This opportunity also allowed staff to respond to any questions and offer clarification about how Kipling Acres supports a LGBT welcoming and inclusive community while building awareness and promoting the opportunities for an ongoing respectful dialogue.

The celebrations at True Davidson Acres kicked off on June 21st with a Flag Raising Ceremony and Tea Dance which included a Silent Auction. Proceeds from the Silent Auction went to the "Diversity is Sweet" campaign to support True Davidson Acres

LGBT programs. City Councillors Janet Davis (Ward 31 Beaches-East York) and Sandra Bussin (Ward 32 Beaches-East York) participated in the event, along with MPP Maria Minna and NDP Candidate Marilyn Churley (representing MPP Michael Prue). This special occasion was attended by approximately two-hundred and fifty (250) residents, family members, friends, volunteers and staff, along with a significant number of Advisory Committee members. Both Michelle Dubarry and Lady Abernathy were present and added to the festivities of the Flag Raising at True Davidson Acres. This special event was reflected in articles captured in the Toronto Sun and the local Ajax-Pickering Community newspapers.

On June 27, 2008, True Davidson Acres hosted “Lady Phyllis Abernathy’s Readings on 19th Century Etiquette” in the Great Hall at the home, where the howls of laughter could be heard throughout the main floor from the many residents’ family, friends, volunteers and staff who became “schooled” in 19th century etiquette.

On June 28th, True Davidson Acres hosted an information table at the Market Fair, where members of the public had the opportunity to stop by and hear about the programs and services offered by Toronto Long-Term Care Homes and Services and support the “Diversity is Sweet” campaign. This was the first time that the division participated in the Market Fair, and this was seen as another successful opportunity to reach out and inform the community about the division’s goal of ensuring the homes are LGBT welcoming and inclusive.

On Sunday June 29th, the City of Toronto celebrated the culmination of the week with the Pride Parade (which attracted nearly one million visitors). The parade included participants from approximately one-hundred and fifty (150) organizations and groups, including Toronto Long-Term Care Homes and Services (all three homes noted in this report). Having decorated the buses, some participants carried banners depicting Toronto Home Long-Term Care Homes and Services and some shamelessly got their water guns ready. Residents, family, friends, volunteers and staff were front and centre in eagerly participating in this year’s parade; this year, Toronto Long-Term Care Homes and Services had approximately forty-five (45) residents, family members, friends, volunteers and staff participating in the parade and proudly representing the division. CUPE Local 79, the union representing the majority of staff within the division also participated in the 2008 parade, in a show of support.

As evidenced through both the Pre-Pride celebrations and the participation at the Pride Parade, Toronto Long-Term Care Homes and Services has embraced the tradition of celebrating Pride Week along with the City of Toronto. One resident noted:

“This is something that I really look forward to all year long. I can hardly wait to see what we will come up with for next year!”

CONTACT

Michael Saunders, Resident-Client Advocate

Phone: 416-392-2957; Fax: 416-392-4180; E-mail: msaunder@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Sandra Pitters

General Manager, Long-Term Care Homes and Services