

## Pride week celebrates & unites students

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The Rainbow Flag was raised at Centre Dufferin District High School (CDDHS) on Monday, June 4th in recognition of Pride Week at the school. Pride Month in Ontario celebrates the history, courage and diversity of the LGBTQ+ community - uniting and empowering people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

CDDHS Principal Wendy McIntosh says, "We are flying the Pride flag to demonstrate our commitment to our students, staff and parents to provide a safe space for our LGBTQ+ community and also other marginalized groups. It was our Social Equity Group with help from teachers and administration that put forth the application to the Board to fly the flag."

Special activities have been initiated and organized by the students with Rebecca Rose as the lead teacher for the school's Social Equity Group. Centre Dufferin has operated the Social Equity Group (formerly Gay-Straight Alliance) for the past 3 years. Ms. Rose says, "The aim of the group is to promote diversity and to celebrate different holidays, events and historical dates of significance for a variety of different cultures." The group planned its 2nd annual Pride Carnival and their first annual Short Film Festival as part of their celebrations for Pride Week.

"This event allows students who identify as LGBTQ to celebrate their diversity and inclusion as a member of the Centre Dufferin community," says Rebecca Rose. "Our hope as a school and a social equity group is to increase the number of events put on and to include the larger community in the planning of future Pride events."

The CDDHS website expresses the school's philosophy on diversity:

"We believe in the principles of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and its assertion that, "Equality rights are at the core of the Charter. They are intended to ensure that everyone is treated with the same respect, dignity and consideration (i.e. without discrimination), regardless of personal characteristics such as race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, residency, marital status or citizenship."

"Everyone who steps foot in our building is valued and appreciated for who they are and flying the flag will remind us that one of our most important roles as educators is to ensure that we promote a sense of community, uphold inclusion and that we proudly walk alongside as allies with all our students."