

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility Highlights

Highlighting: Municipality of Clare Pride Month Event

"I've never been able to be so myself; this is the best day ever!" – Event Participant

This month, Recreation Nova Scotia is recognizing the efforts of the Municipality of Clare as a part of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Highlights series. In June, the Municipality's Recreation Department planned and hosted Pride events in the community. The event was a new addition to the Municipality's Pride Month activities. The Municipality flies the Pride flag and has hosted activities in the past, but this was the first full-day event for Pride. Though attendance at the event was low, this is an excellent example of how organizations commit to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility, even when experiencing challenges and hardships.

The Municipality's Pride Event included a "Frenchy's Fashion Show," a "Pride Float & Paddle," and a community event which included music, face painting, a temporary tattoo station, and lawn games. The Frenchy's Fashion Show was a private youth event with members of the community's Gender Sexuality Alliance to find outfits from local thrift stores and gather at the Lion's Club to get dressed up, receive a drag makeup tutorial from a local drag performer and sing karaoke. The event was kept private to create a safe space for youth to participate, which was much appreciated by those in attendance. One participant told an event leader, "I've never been able to be so myself; this is the best day ever!"



Organizer Jessica Martin leaned on community partnership in planning the event and tried to include as many community members and organizations in the planning as possible. She also took advantage of another event in the community, "Pride was the first day of our local Burger Week. So, we had two burger week competitors come to the venue for a Burger Cookoff." She said that the Burger Week event had the highest attendance, which created an opportunity, "Where most attended to try the burger and not participate in Pride, they still had exposure to Pride festivities and the community. It may be a small win, but it's a win nonetheless."

After the event, Martin performed a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis with the help of staff. During this exercise, staff shared why they felt the turnout was lower than hoped, "Summer staff voiced that it wouldn't matter how awesome the event is, as soon as people in Clare hear "pride" they're not going." She said staff were disappointed with the turnout after working hard to plan and host the event.

Martin says the event was necessary for the community and went beyond the one-day event, "As a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, I wanted to make sure people knew people like them were out there and gathering." Martin will continue to move forward and plans to host Pride events in Clare again next year, "While participation was low, I'm proud to be in a community that encourages these activities on a municipal level. We will continue to expand our pride activities next year!" Martin feels that consistency will help in the future, "I think having more exposure to Pride and inclusive activities will help switch the dialogue slowly."