This page was exported from - Caledon Citizen
Export date: Thu Mar 28 13:20:19 2024 / +0000 GMT

Volunteer MBC announces partnership with Peel HIV/AIDS Network

History was made Feb. 9 when Peel HIV/AIDS Network (PHAN) and Volunteer MBC formed a partnership to create an increased understanding of the unique barriers and challenges faced by current and prospective lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, Plus (LGBTQ+) volunteers.

The partnership is the result of the approval of a grant application for a Partnership Grants Program and will develop appropriate strategies to increase a sense of inclusion for the LGBTQ+ communities within not-for-profit organizations.

Studies show that despite enormous social, cultural and legislative change in Ontario in recent decades, many from the LGBTQ+ community still face discrimination. While data exists to describe LGBTQ+ inclusion in employment, no data is available to describe LGBTQ+ inclusion in volunteerism. And just as volunteerism is a means to contribute to society, it also nurtures community connection, strengthens social networks, skill development and increased self-esteem among other benefits for LGBTQ+ volunteers.

?Not-for-profit organizations play an integral part in our social fabric and deliver programs and services that improve people's everyday lives,? Citizenship and Immigration Minister Laura Albanese said. ?I look forward to the outcomes of this project which promotes inclusivity in volunteering.?

The partnership between PHAN and Volunteer MBC will create training and tools that support the integration of the LGBTQ+ community. The project will adapt and expand upon nationally-recognized best practices that not-for-profit agencies should strive toward in order to create safer and more welcoming spaces for LGBTQ+ volunteers in Ontario. An element of the project will also involve Volunteer MBC working with PHAN to develop and implement an LGBTQ+ inclusive volunteer management program. The two organizations will work closely to adapt existing best practices in volunteer management tools and resources to address LGBTQ+ volunteer inclusion, and where necessary, develop new tools.

Once evaluated, refined and finalized, these tools will be made available via Volunteer MBC to its members and through the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network (OVCN).

In addition, PHAN will offer LGBTQ+ inclusion trainings and consultations to not-for-profits in Peel and The Gilbert Centre will be trained to offer these in Simcoe County/Muskoka as part of their mandate to improve the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ communities in a more rural setting.

This historic partnership will create an inclusive environment that will open doors for the LGBTQ+ community, helping to establish a united community that ensures a safe and healthy environment where people truly care for each other.

Volunteer MBC is a volunteer centre serving the Town of Caledon and the Cities of Mississauga and Brampton. The centre strives to be a strong voice to support and promote volunteerism.