

Local drag and dance fundraiser slated for Saturday

By Isabel Buckmaster

While 2SLGBTQIA+ folk in Dufferin County are proud 365 days a year, June is when they raise their flags, starting with this Saturday's drag show and dance at Rainbow Ridge Resort.

A fundraiser for Celebrate Your Awesome's Annual Pride and Diversity Day, the 19+ party costs \$10 at the door and is BYOB. Performances will feature four local drag queens, starting at 7 p.m. and end with a dance party that's running from sunset to sunrise.

"I think the drag community has always embraced all ages, all sexual orientations, you know, all the allies of the queer community and allows people to you know, express themselves openly," said Jim Waddington, volunteer and event coordinator.

While many of Waddington's friends take part in the drag community, he believes that "he would need an entire crew" to beat his face (with makeup) to compete, although he does "occasionally don [his] mother's pearls," as well as costume jewelry.

In February 2019, Celebrate Your Awesome held two drag shows around Valentine's Day with just under 270 people apiece. The 19+ event "was absolutely sold out," while the all-ages performance came close. Waddington anticipates a similar turnout at The Ridge this weekend.

"In the beginning, Pride was to stand up, to be seen, to be accepted, to be acknowledged, but it's evolved over the years into a celebration almost like a butterfly that was at one point a little funny caterpillar," said Waddington. "Now Pride is even more open and we want to celebrate that as much as possible."

One of four gay and lesbian resorts in Southern Ontario and 72 acres total, Rainbow Ridge Resort is a fully featured adult 2SLGBTQIA+ resort and campground.

"A lot of people are still unaware of The Ridge," said Waddington. "So, we're certainly trying to bring more light to the resort and to encourage people to come out and use it."

Waddington also hopes that Dufferin County's public pride won't end with June.

"I think it's a very sort of matter of fact, kind of community when it comes to our 2SLGBTQIA+ here. There's not a stigma, it's just a norm and I think that's one of the reasons we called the event Celebrate Your Awesome," said Waddington.

"The committee has certainly worked very diligently to promote and encourage people of all ages, sexual orientations and gender, to be themselves and to just be who you are."

Despite local resources like GLOW, a 2SLGBTQIA+ youth group that meets twice a week through Dufferin Child and Family Services (DCAFS), Waddington would also like to see more facilities where "the queer community can meet," as well as additional funding.

Celebrate Your Awesome's dance fundraiser at Rainbow Ridge starts at 7 p.m. on Saturday (June 11) and entry is \$10 at the door.

The Ridge is located at 203138 County Rd. 109.