

GLBT Members Speak Out Against Recent Hate Crime in Hamilton

By Troy Patterson

The Satellite

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The Hamilton gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community has made a statement against hate crimes.

According to a media release from the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Advisory Committee for the City of Hamilton has invited other members of the community to join their next meeting. It takes place at Hamilton City Hall tomorrow at 6pm in Room 219.

The meeting was called in reaction to a violent attack against a well-known gay citizen of Hamilton, which shocked the GLBT members and the mandate they stand by. The incident demonstrated an urgent need to dialogue with the community as one united voice, in order to truly heal, learn and grow together without prejudice.

“The recent vicious hate crime committed against a well-known gay citizen of Hamilton has deeply shaken our Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender community,” says Lyla Miklos, Interim Chair of the GLBT Advisory Committee for the City of Hamilton. “As much as this crime impacts the very core of our identities, we must not allow ourselves to give in to fear as a result of this tragedy. GLBT Hamiltonians have accomplished so much to be proud and loud about.”

This summer recognizes the 8th Annual Hamilton Pride Festival and Miklos said the event will recognize all aspects of the Hamilton Community.

“We have committees, agencies and organizations that represent every facet of our GLBT community who work directly with business, police, local government, education, faith groups, media and health care,” she said. “Lesbians and gay men have been able to formally and legally acknowledge their relationships by registering for marriage licenses. More and more religious communities not only tolerate us, but also accept us. GLBT citizens are positive, prominent and powerful assets throughout our magnificent city.”

Through an ongoing struggle to end homophobia and heterosexism , the GLBT Hamiltonians have seen progress, but their job is far from over. Miklos said intolerance and hate towards this part of the community is still being taught and reinforced to this day.

“It is only through education and communication that the unknown becomes less of a mystery and hence something all of us no longer need to fear,” she said.

The mandate of the GLBT Advisory Committee for the City of Hamilton is to make recommendations about policies, procedures and guidelines, which address the needs and concerns of GLBT people. Our committee accomplishes this by liaising with agencies and organizations, providing forums where

members of the GLBT community can share information, educating the broader community on issues affecting the GLBT community and developing interrelationships amongst City departments.

For more information about attending the March 10th meeting please RSVP with Carolyn Bish, Administrative Assistant to Jane Lee, at (905) 546-2424 x5174 or at cbish@hamilton.ca. If you would like to become a member of the GLBT Advisory Committee for the City of Hamilton please e-mail Jane Lee, Director-Customer Service at jlee@hamilton.ca and include your contact info and a short bio. The committee is looking for new members to come on board for its next term of office, which starts in Spring 2004.