



All Genders
Yukon Society

April 23, 2020

For Immediate Release:

Yukon Pride Centre Welcomes First Executive Director

Queer Yukon Society (QYS) and All Genders Yukon Society (AGYS) have hired Joe Wickenhauser who will serve as the Executive Director for Yukon's first Pride Centre. Last month, QYS and AGYS announced a partnership to establish a Pride Centre in Yukon to develop a safe and visible space for Yukon's LGBTQ2S+ communities.

Chris Boodram, President of QYS, said Wickenhauser was hired following a national search that generated interest from nearly 30 candidates: "Thanks to the support of the Yukon Government, we are thrilled to be able to hire someone with a proven track record of working collaboratively with rural LGBTQ2S+ communities to identify and establish needed programs and services."

Wickenhauser co-founded Moose Jaw Pride, a Pride Festival which later developed a community drop-in centre, a provincial network of pride organizers, and a thrift shop under his leadership.

Boodram added that the Pride Centre's first Executive Director will be key to ensuring its long-term success and that Wickenhauser would be a welcome addition to the team: "We are looking forward to accomplishing great things for our communities with his support."

Chase Blodgett, President of AGYS thanked the Yukon government for recognizing the crucial need for a safe space for LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners and welcomed Wickenhauser to the new role: "Joe brings great vision, skills and experience to this project and has a strong awareness of the unique challenges facing gender and sexually diverse folks in northern rural communities."

Originally from Strasbourg, SK (pop. 700), Wickenhauser's experience as a queer person in a rural community inspired him to work to support others in a similar setting.

"It took me a long time to accept myself because there were no resources or supports available to me in my community," Wickenhauser said. "But once I realized there were so many other LGBTQ2S+ people like me in small towns and rural areas, I wanted to find ways to connect."

After searching for queer identity and community in larger cities, Wickenhauser completed a master's thesis on the history of LGBTQ2S+ advocacy and organizing in Moose Jaw and Saskatchewan. When he returned to Moose Jaw to visit family, community members asked him to organize some pride events.

“100 people showed up to our flag raising and I was completely stunned. That was when we started to dream about what else could be possible,” Wickenhauser said.

Over time, Moose Jaw Pride incorporated and began offering support services and educational workshops, advocating for change, and developing year-round programming in smaller communities across Saskatchewan. The organization also partnered with the local school division to develop inclusive policies, a Gay Straight Alliance, and to create Canada’s first high school credit course on gender and sexual diversity.

In addition to his work with Moose Jaw Pride, Wickenhauser has passionately promoted LGBTQ2S+ history through walking tours, presentations, and even the curation of Saskatchewan’s first permanent exhibit on gender and sexual diversity at the Moose Jaw Museum and Art Gallery.

Wickenhauser also played a lead role in developing the “Time 4 Rights” social media campaign which led to explicit protections for gender identity and gender expression within the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code.

Wickenhauser has received numerous awards for his work including a Saskatoon Heritage Award, CBC Saskatchewan’s Future 40 Award, and a nomination as Moose Jaw’s Citizen of the Year.

Most recently, Wickenhauser has worked for Fierté Canada Pride as the Tourism Development Manager and has been supporting pride organizations dealing with fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. Although he is currently working remotely from Kelowna, Wickenhauser plans to relocate to Whitehorse over the summer.

In developing the Yukon Pride Centre, Wickenhauser said he plans to spend the coming weeks continuing to connect with people in the LGBTQ2S+ community and other community leaders across Yukon which have already generated some exciting ideas.

“As a newcomer to Yukon, it's really important for me to take the time to engage with and learn from the community I will be serving—I'm really looking forward to the incredible things we'll be able to accomplish together.”

- 30 -

For more information or for media requests, please contact:

Chris Boodram
President, Queer Yukon Society
(613) 237-9554
boodramcp@yahoo.ca

OR

Chase Blodgett
President
All Genders Yukon Society
(867) 689-2673
c.blodgett@hotmail.com

OR

Joe Wickenhauser
Executive Director, Yukon Pride Centre
(306) 313-8455
joe@queeryukon.com

-

About Us Queer Yukon Society

Queer Yukon Society supports, promotes, and organizes events for the LGBTQ2S+ community and our allies in Whitehorse, Yukon. Officially incorporated in 2018, Queer Yukon has been organizing Yukon Pride since 2013, as well as many other events to bring together LGBTQ2S+ and allied Yukoners to build a strong and vibrant community.

All Genders Yukon Society

The All Genders Yukon Society provides services to members of the Trans, Two-Spirit, Non-binary and questioning community, as well as their primary supports (significant others, family and immediate supports). AGYS helps community members by distributing funding for mental health services. Additionally, AGYS meets the needs of this demographic as requested which includes outreach, social and community events (suspended due to COVID-19), resources for tourists and information about how to access trans-friendly medical services. Contact us at AGYSboard@gmail.com