

Chair's Report

Prepared by Morgan Manzer

Responsibilities

The Chair is responsible for the general supervision of the activities of the Society and for the effectiveness of the Board. The Chair is the presiding officer of the Society.

Overview

The appointment of the Society's first full-time employee - Executive Director, Adam Reid - significantly changed the role of the Chair and the board as a whole. For several years, the volunteer board of directors were overburdened with the planning and execution of the festival and, therefore, lacked the capacity to engage in full-scale community consultation. The Society was also too slow to adapt to the evolving needs of the community. I assumed the role of the Chair several weeks after our 2016 annual general meeting and sought to set a tone of change. The board embraced an action-oriented approach to changing the way we operated. We understood from the outset that the trust of the community would have to be rebuilt, gradually, through concrete actions. That work continues. We continue to reassess every aspect of the Society and re-evaluate all programming we run to ensure it achieves our objectives.

I oversaw the transition from a "working board" model to Mr. Reid having responsibility for managing and overseeing the day-to-day affairs and operations of the Society. As Chair, I kept in constant contact with Mr. Reid to participate in operational decisions and provide board oversight.

Successes

- **Board Diversity:** The board recognized that a constellation of factors lead to a board that did not adequately reflect the diversity of your community. We appointed two directors from traditionally underrepresented groups.
- **Collegiality:** The directors of Halifax Pride are a diverse group of folks with differing backgrounds, lived experiences, and perspectives who often tackle difficult issues that are core to others' identities. These conversations have been challenging at times, but I believe the board has approached them thoughtfully and respectfully.
- **Policy Development/By-laws:** Through our partnership with McInnes Cooper, and with community consultation, we had a substantial re-drafting of our by-laws. In an effort to create safer spaces at all our events, we developed and implemented numerous policies, including: a dispute resolution policy, an anti-discrimination policy, and a safer spaces policy and statement.
- **Appointment of ED:** Mr. Reid was appointed as the first Executive Director in December 2016 following a search and selection process completed by an independent consultant and panel of community members.

Opportunities for Improvement

- **Committees:** The Society is best served with a more decentralized decision-making structure to allow for more diverse voices to be heard. This was the impetus for "committees". Committees allow for a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down

approach. They also allow for direct organizational participation with a lower time commitment. Terms of reference need to be developed to clearly define the scope, budget, and timeline for completion of tasks for each committee.

- **Community Engagement:** Understandably, there was apprehension by some within the community to engage with Pride in any capacity. We must slowly and sensitively have dialogue to rebuild relationships.
- **Cultural Competency:** Cultural competence is a commitment to developing the knowledge, skills and ability to interact and communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the board must continue to receive training on the beliefs, values, customs, and societal issues affecting QBIPOC folks and other marginalized communities to progress along the cultural competency continuum.

Recommendations

The Society continues to struggle with the lack of human resources. Funds will need to be raised and allocated to the creation of additional contract positions to support the work of Mr. Reid.

In addition to the terms of reference for the committees, the board must review the job description of the ED and more clearly define the roles and authority of the ED versus the oversight function of the board.

The board must develop a comprehensive five-year strategic plan to map out the goals and priorities of the Society and the actions needed to achieve those goals.

Vice Chair's Report

Prepared by Karina Furlan

Vice Chair Responsibilities

In the absence, illness or incapacity of the Chair, or during such period as the Chair may request the Vice-Chair to do so, the Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair and shall perform such duties as may be assigned to the Vice-Chair by the directors from time to time.

Overview

As Vice-chair, I actively participated in the planning and execution of all aspects of the festival, including but not limited to administrative support, programming, community outreach, and accessibility and inclusion initiatives. Throughout the year, I worked to ensure smooth and effective actualization of tasks, supporting portfolio holders as required, taking over duties unable to be completed by the assigned portfolio holders, and engaging in conflict resolution as necessary. During the Fierste Canada Pride Conference hosted by Halifax Pride in February, I took an active leadership role, ensuring guests felt welcomed, making myself generally available, and opening a number of the workshops with the at the time newly created "Safer Spaces" statement.

Successes

- Assisted in the development and implementation of a number of committees, with greatest focus on "Accessibility"
- Assisted in the creation of the "Safer Spaces" and "Land Acknowledgement" statements
- Helped organize and facilitate a successful Fierste Canada Pride Conference, welcoming Pride organizers from across the country
- Ongoing discussions with the Halifax Regional Police force surrounding education and building positive relationships with the queer community

Opportunities for Improvement

- As the "committee" structure was a new initiative this year, there is much room for improvement. Earlier organization and activation of the various committees (plus the addition of a few more) would likely prove extremely beneficial in capitalizing on their potential, as well as inviting a larger and more diverse number of voices into the planning field
- Ongoing discussions with the Halifax Regional Police force surrounding education and building positive relationships with the queer community
- Continuing to rebuild bridges and relationships with various community groups, increasing the diversity of the voices contributing to the Halifax Pride Festival

Recommendations

This year has seen great strides towards a more inclusive and accessible festival. Ongoing communication, consultation, and collaboration with various community groups and individuals will hopefully aid in highlighting the rich diversity of this community, with continued and additional focus on education and art.

Marketing Director's Report

Prepared by Shea Peach

Overview

As a Director with the Halifax Pride Board, I coordinated the marketing and promotion efforts for the festival. Focusing on the development of the campaign theme for the 2017 festival and the development of the visual assets used to promote the festival.

Through fostering a continued valuable relationship with Revolve Branding, the marketing theme for the 2017 festival was a continuation and expansion of the 2016 festival theme "This is Why," highlighting the main reasons why pride festivals exist and remain relevant. The expansion of the theme this year focused on ongoing issues community members face. The campaign was executed across a broad range of mediums including print, radio, online/digital, social and transit.

Mirror Image Media joined Halifax Pride for the second year, capturing the festival through video. A teaser video was produced with last year's footage to promote the 2017 festival, while new footage will be used to create the 2017 post-festival video and a new teaser video next year to promote the 2018 festival.

Stoo Metz with Click Productions photographed the festival producing photos of many events both hosted by Halifax Pride and by community members/groups, that were shared on social media. Photos will also be used next year to promote 2018 festival events through social media event pages and advertising.

The Halifax Pride Guide was produced with a new vision this year. Shifting the focus to incorporate mostly festival and community content, and limiting ad space specifically to festival sponsors.

Successes

- Halifax Pride's theme, This is Why, is arguably the most relevant and representative theme the festival has ever seen. The Halifax Pride festival should be representative of all community members, providing a safe place for everyone to celebrate pride in a way that is authentic for each person. This should be prevalent in all of Halifax Pride's marketing and promotional material. The 2016 theme moved promotional material in this direction. The 2017 material improved upon the previous year's successes and learned from its opportunities. 2018 represents another year to continue this growth.
- The Pride Guide has for many years been seen as a corporate book of advertising that was not representative or reflective of the community. Great effort was taken for the 2017 guide to shift the focus and ensure that ad placement was limited to festival sponsors and the bulk of the content focused on community and festival events, and community members. A new section in the guide included snapshots of changes being implemented internally by several festival sponsors at their own organizations to ensure equitable practices are being implemented in the workplace.

- Sponsorship growth helped Halifax Pride get the word out this year. One instance was from a returning sponsor that added the delivery of Pride Guides to its offering, while the two new sponsors joined Halifax Pride and resulted in increased exposure of Halifax Pride's visual advertising assets.

Opportunities for Improvement

- For two years in a row the festival theme has advanced and progressed to improve its relevance to community members. This planning happens early each year with Board members and marketing experts around the table. Starting on the right foot, with the community, its members and relevant issues as the main focus, is the key to success. Maintaining this focus each year is a prerequisite to ensure the festival promotional material speaks to and resonates with community members. This is an area where growth will be ongoing and continued efforts will improve success.
- The shift in focus for the Pride Guide, with removal of corporate ad placement for purchase, has resulted in increased costs to produce the guide, specifically related to layout and printing. An opportunity for savings could exist if a print sponsorship relationship with magazine production expertise was to be cultivated.
- Negotiations with existing and new media sponsors of the festival should continue to ensure optimal value and exposure is being achieved from these relationships.

Communication Director's Report

Prepared by Ellen Davis

Communications Overview

In this role, I co-managed most communications activities and responsibilities for the society, organization, and festival. Working with the executive director, and the Communications Committee, I worked towards effective and strategic dissemination of information to society members, community members, and the general public about Halifax Pride's activities, decisions and direction in the 2016 - 2017 year.

Daily tasks included constant social media management and monitoring, the creation of media content, media relations, and website management. General responsibilities included working with the board of directors and executive director to develop strategies and key messages for the effective dissemination of information to improve transparency within the society and further organizational goals.

I also contributed to the development of the Community Report outlining Halifax Pride's activities to improve the Society in 2016-2017, and to the development of community surveys.

Successes

- Increase effort to provide better opportunities for community online feedback.
- Stronger effort to improve the accessibility of Halifax Pride web and social media channels, including image descriptions, and ASL and described video.
- Training and development: Challenging Conversations, Women in Pride, Media Relations strategies
- Began structured effort to develop a comprehensive crisis management and communication plan for festival emergencies.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Create standardized template for key messages, responses, and important information to be communicated to reduce duplicated effort between volunteers answering requests from public and media.
- Effectively prepare social media responses to potentially controversial announcements to remove instances of harmful comments and aggressive debates on Halifax Pride pages.
- Develop promotional strategies for individual events
- Earlier announcement of festival dates and details.

Accessibility Director's Report

Prepared by Karina Furlan

Overview

The Accessibility Committee (2017) was officially comprised of five individuals plus this Halifax Pride director (and a few other individuals who couldn't commit to an actual committee role but served as excellent resources leading up to the festival), all with varying lived experiences and levels of ability (e.g. wheelchair-bound, able-bodied, deaf and hearing impaired, cis- and trans- identified, etc.) While the intention was for the group to meet collectively in person, most consultation and feedback was conducted via email, with only a couple small meetings with individuals. General feedback seems to indicate the 2017 Pride Festival as Halifax's most accessible to date.

Successes

- The accessible viewing stage alongside the parade route was once again (for the third consecutive year) set up for folks with mobility issues or who experience difficulty standing for long periods of time, and was fully utilized, with generally positive feedback
- An accessible viewing area was built onto the main festival site (Garrison Grounds), featuring a ramp entrance and a solid and flat wooden platform over the grass/uneven terrain
- Increased ASL interpretation, with the interpreters specifically selected by members of the Queer Deaf Community, allowing for increased satisfaction and enjoyment of the events by those individuals
- Added "security presence" to the "accessibility legend" within the Pride Guide (previously indicated: 19+, wheelchair accessible, all-gender washrooms, closed captioning, ASL interpretation, drug- and alcohol-free)

Opportunities for Improvement

- The accessible viewing area on the main festival site wasn't significantly utilized. A redesigned space with better promotion of its existence would likely (hopefully) prove more effective.
- Continued research, consultation, and feedback to determine what "accessibility" means to different folks, with the aim of increasing the inclusivity of all festival spaces
- The Halifax Pride website (www.halifaxpride.com), despite a complete and significantly improved redesigning this past year, continues to require some redevelopment with attention to accessibility details, e.g. font and font sizing, compatibility with mobile devices, etc.

Recommendations

Assembling and activating the committee earlier would be beneficial. Many ideas were generated for the 2017 festival, but there was not enough time to implement them. In person group meetings would also likely be effective as it would allow for more collaborative discussion and quicker response time (emails rely on folks checking and responding immediately, which is rarely realistic).

Board Director's Report

Prepared by Dylan White

Overview

Over the past year, along with general board responsibilities (ie. meetings, governance, etc.), my duties as director included ensuring the *halifaxpride.com* domain served as an effective tool to communicate to our membership and community. After realizing our former website was not easily navigable, I built a new website, keeping accessibility in mind. The website offers a clean layout of all relevant information and includes a schedule that can be easily filtered into categories, such as: free events, community organized, Halifax Pride committee events, etc. Frequent tasks included creation of last minute graphics and materials for print and social media needs. In addition, I was responsible for creation of more major graphics initiatives (festival passes, rainbow run bib, stickers, etc.) which allowed the committee to cut costs of hiring a graphics company.

Successes

- Complete overhaul of *halifaxpride.com*
- Easy event navigation on *halifaxpride.com*
- Quick links on *halifaxpride.com* event page for accessibility options and no cost
- OUTBid Auction was a great success
- Happening Today postings each morning over social during pride
- Rainbow Run bibs looked great!

Opportunities for Improvement

- Releasing event information earlier.
- More help collecting auction items.
- Develop system to aid with event data collection.
- Ensure donation envelopes are more accessible during fundraising events.
- Provide greeters at each event that are tasked with ensuring new and visiting attendees feel welcome.

Logistics Director's Report

Prepared by Paul Forrest

Overview

Overall the operations and logistics of the festival and annual planning of the society went well. It was hopeful that the new Executive Director position would be able to venture into the logistical operations of the festival however it was realized that the position would be prioritized in other areas. The switch from the parade to the opening weekend create some challenges of new logistical conflicts that haven't occurred before. The majority of logistical organization and delivery relied on board and volunteers which could be shifted to a new contract position for 2018 due to capacity restraints.

Successes

- New layout of the festival site decreased sound impact on south end residents.
- Accessibility platform and ramps over ditch on festival site allowed accessibility.
- Revised bar setup with an additional bar tent and kegs reduced lines up

Opportunities for Improvement

- Finalize logistical requirements in spring so information can be disseminated earlier
- Development of a logistical committee/ working group that could share workload

Recommendations

In order for the festival to move forward a contract position should be hired to deliver solely on the operations/ logistical requirements. This area requires a significant amount of time and expertise during the festival and the best way for logistics to continue to improve is to have a contract position.

Volunteer Coordinator's Report

Prepared by Tristan ten Brinke

Responsibilities

Each year, the volunteer coordinator must review the practices and execution of the previous year's festival, identify the areas that require changes or improvement, and taking all necessary steps to create a clear, productive plan for the current festival. They must also create, distribute, and ensure the completion of volunteer registration and shift sign up forms. During the festival, they must be in attendance for the majority of, or all events, ensure clear communication between volunteers, board members and team leads, and oversee the volunteer management at events.

Overview

This year we saw our highest volunteer turnout ever! So many of you worked extremely hard and we at Halifax Pride cannot thank you enough. There were so many dedicated and passionate individuals who put so much time, heart, and soul into the festival. Many people this year were and continue to be heavily involved, some stepping into positions involving the board.

Successes

- This year saw our largest volunteer turnout yet with 161 volunteers!
- We had some phenomenally passionate volunteers this year. These people are the backbone of our festival and we could not have done it without them.
- One of our dedicated volunteers this year is stepping up to help run the volunteer program for 2018!
- Some volunteers offered their assistance at events they were merely attending when they saw we were understaffed!

Opportunities for Improvement

- Volunteer accountability
- Encourage sign-up for the "less fun" events
- Impose a daily maximum for hours worked to avoid burnout
- Have registration earlier
- Make volunteering more accessible

Recommendations

We had a large issue this year with volunteers signing up for shifts but not fulfilling their obligation. Many people could not be reached leaving shifts extremely understaffed or empty. I would like to find an accountability system to avoid this issue in the future. I would also like to suggest a daily limit on the number of hours worked by a single volunteer. This year we had some people who seriously overworked themselves. We want people working with Halifax Pride to not only enjoy this side of the festival, but to take care of themselves too.

Parade Coordinator's Report

Prepared by David Duplisea

Responsibilities

Parade Coordinator is responsible for the overall logistical and creative direction of the festival's parade, working in conjunction with the ED, committee members, and same-day volunteers. The coordinator is responsible for communicating, registering, and facilitating parade related tasks to ensure the parade is safe, organised, profitable, and meets the needs of the community and Pride Society's goals.

Overview

2017 brought many changes to the parade as a whole, including: fee waiving for 2SLGBTQ+ groups, restructuring and prioritising lineup of the parade, and general fee increases to meet the financial goals/needs for implementing the parade. The prioritising of our First Nations' Two Spirited group at the front of the parade was well received and demonstrated a more progressive and inclusive element that was requested by the community. 2017 also was a milestone in regards to the participation, for the first time in Halifax, of the Prime Minister of Canada. Much attention was focused on the parade and media coverage was notably increased; however, the inclusion of the PM should have been in tandem with a meeting/discussion about the needs of the community.

Successes

- 25 2SLGBTQ+ groups registered and were prioritised at the front of the parade.
- 35 community groups, 19 union/government services, 13 small businesses, 4 medium businesses, 8 large businesses, and 18 sponsors and a handful of community relevant participants -- Approximately 125 spots were filled!
- Revenue from sales was \$38,900 (not including fees and operating costs) versus \$27,500 in 2016
- Information session for parade participants was a huge success and presented an opportunity to educate about our community's needs, as well as to gather valuable information on opportunities for improvement

Opportunities for Improvement

- All volunteers assigned to post parade cleanup did not show up or stay, resulting in the parade coordinator cleaning the entire area alone. After a reprimand from DND in 2016, a post parade clean up is mandatory. If possible, a cleaning company should be acquired or a request to have the city run street cleaners through as they do on the city streets should be requested.
- Marshaling of participants needs to have more resources. This year's attempt to line up in rows, leaving by number and not single file in rows did not work. Participants are accustomed to leaving single file. Reverting back to this strategy next year. More resources and training may have made leaving by spot number manageable.
- Better communication with participants and sponsors is needed. More coverage on social media and website on logistics is needed.
- Tickets need to be finalised and structured much earlier (suggest Feb/March).

Executive Director's Report

Prepared by Adam Reid

Overview

As the first Executive Director of the Halifax Pride Society, I was tasked with the a variety of high level festival planning duties such as venue selection, contract negotiation, sponsorship, and community partner outreach. All of these activities were conducted with direction and input from the board. Logistical planning for the 2017 festival ramped up in April 2017, but from the time of my hiring in December 2016 until April, my main focus was on diverse community outreach and organizational review. It was clear that my primary duty as I began my role was meeting with community members, listening to concerns, and considering areas in most urgent need of change. This process of community consultation lead to the creation of a variety of new policies and programs (many of which were described in the Chair's Report) that aim to improve Halifax Pride's capacity to run the society and festival in a way that is inclusive, diverse, welcoming, and open to change and review. We recognize the work is ongoing but we are committed to further change and increased community investment and outreach.

Successes

- Began hosting regular monthly community meetings to offer reports on Pride activities and to consult with our membership on proposed ideas
- Hosted the national 2017 Fierté Canada Pride Conference (association of Canadian Pride organizers)
- Launched the Community Event Funding Program to offer financial assistance to help LGBT2Q+ community event ideas become a reality
- Launched a new committee structure to allow for more diverse voices in planning and execution of the festival
- A new Partner Initiative Survey allowed for greater understanding of sponsor activities as they relate to the 2SLGBTQ+ community

Opportunities for Improvement

- Diverse community participation on committees and the board must continue to be prioritized
- Developing procedures and policies around the structure of committees will be needed
- The success of the Community Event Funding Program is a clear indication that additional bursary programs would be a benefit to the community