



Media Release

Saturday, June 12th, 2021

Here at Trans Wellness Ontario, our mission is to “enhance and sustain the health and wellness of transgender, genderqueer, nonbinary, queer, and questioning communities and their families”. This includes civil advocacy, activism, and condemning instances of transphobia, queerphobia, and other forms of bigotry, ignorance, and discrimination.

A member of the Windsor community recently contacted T-Bears Creamery, an ice cream place in the Forest Glade area (Windsor, Ontario). They requested a custom-made cake to present to their partner in celebration of their birthday with a picture of their favorite drag queen on it. The worker and manager refused service to this community member and made several transphobic and queerphobic comments and remarks to justify their discriminatory act.

This type of hate and bigotry has no place in our Windsor community. Over the past several months, we have seen a sharp increase in the number of hate crimes that have taken place. Within Windsor alone, Trans Wellness Ontario experienced three separate acts of vandalism in February, and a local LGBTQ+ household experienced acts of vandalism, perpetrated by the same individual who attacked our centre in February. When microaggressions, harassment, and inappropriate conduct are not called out, it is one step closer to the next hate crime. It is a clear rejection of human dignity and contributes to the dehumanization of our community.

At Trans Wellness Ontario, we provide educational programming for workplaces, businesses, and organizations who are seeking to learn about the importance of inclusivity and allyship for the queer and trans community. We hope that this incident can be a learning opportunity. Thus, we are extending an invitation to T-Bears Creamery to meet with representatives of Trans Wellness Ontario to discuss the importance of language and to debunk some common myths about our community. Drag queens and kings, trans and nonbinary people, and queer folks and their allies deserve to be able to be themselves without fear of discrimination or ignorance. We believe that education starts with a conversation, and here at Trans Wellness Ontario, we seek to educate anyone who is willing to listen and work with us to create safe spaces for our community. An apology for harmful language does not change the trauma experienced by queer and trans individuals from this dehumanization and invalidation. A true apology comes with accountability, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been caused, and clear work (through education) to create a safe space for the community that has been harmed. We hope that T-Bears Creamery (and any other organization who is seeking to learn about the trans and queer community) will take us up on our offer for this important educational opportunity.

For those in Windsor who have been hurt by the comments from the T-Bears staff - we see you. We hear your stories, we hear your pain, and we are sorry for your experience. Together, we will continue to challenge bigotry and discrimination against our community. Please remember that you are valid, you have the right to be safe, and you have the right to live as your authentic self. We are here for you, and you are not alone.

We hope that our Windsor community will continue to rally behind and advocate for the beloved members of our trans and queer community. We especially encourage you to support local dessert places who will be donating partial proceeds to our organization for Pride Month - Ernie & Rusty's Dairy Bar, Plant Joy, and TLC Bakery. By supporting these amazing businesses and rallying together, we can create a community where everyone feels safe, validated, and can live their true, authentic selves.