

CIF FEATURE STORY:

Saskatchewan Pride Network.



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Feature Story: *Saskatchewan Pride Network, Moose Jaw Pride*

The [Saskatchewan Pride Network](#) seeks to support and empower LGBT+ people living in smaller communities across Saskatchewan. The ultimate goal is to create safer, more welcoming and more inclusive communities through the provision of inclusive community events and educational opportunities. The 7 communities targeted through this project include Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Weyburn, Estevan, Yorkton, Humboldt and Prince Albert.

“Through this project, we help to organize community events, provide diversity training to organizations and connect individuals with support, information and resources,” shares Joe Wickenhauser, Executive Director of Moose Jaw Pride. **“This project also helps to fund our Moose Jaw drop-in centre where we are able to provide in-person peer support, a lending library and a safe space for LGBT+ people.”**

The Saskatchewan Pride Network’s project primarily aims to support LGBT+ people living in smaller communities across Saskatchewan. However, it also does a lot of work supporting families, businesses and service providers who have a strong desire to understand and support gender and sexual diversity.

The education program has been extremely successful and well received with nearly 300 people receiving training in the past 6 months. The Saskatchewan Pride Network has also hosted more than 25 community events across Saskatchewan. Through community events, the project is seeing many people attending who are looking for community, information and support. Parents and those coming out for the first time also appreciate having a place to go, someone to talk to and resources to support them through this transition.

“Because of the funding we have received from the Community Initiatives Fund, we have been able to engage many communities around Saskatchewan and start conversations about gender and sexual diversity through events, media coverage and education sessions,” shares Wickenhauser. **“We are proud to see additional smaller communities across Saskatchewan beginning to hold Pride events and various community initiatives to support LGBT+ people.”**

“ This whole organization goes out into the community to make everybody feel welcome and safe and I think that’s a good thing. ”

- Sarah Williams, trans woman who regularly volunteers at the Pride Office and at community events.



Local Pride Week organizer, Rhiannon Benjamin, addresses a crowd of more than 100 people at Weyburn City Hall for the community’s first ever Pride Flag Raising event in June 2016. **Photo Credit:** Joe Wickenhauser