

## Businesses step up to support Pflag as Digital Pride continues

Supporting local has been a predominant theme over the last 16 months ? and Pride month is no exception. This month, however, local businesses are stepping up to help support 2SLGBTQ+ organizations.

Pflag York Region is partnering with businesses in Markham, Vaughan and Georgina to help raise money for the local chapter of the organization which provides support, outreach and education to the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Participating businesses include Lashes & Lipstick Beauty Bar in Markham, Sugar Mommy Chocolate & Treats in Vaughan, and Turkey Shoot Brewing Co. in Keswick.

Lashes & Lipstick, a long-time supporter of Pflag York Region will donate 10 per cent of all retail sales to the organization through the month of June.

Also during Pride Month, Sugar Mommy will donate \$20 from each sale of their Pride Platters ? ?a rainbow of their gourmet chocolate chip cookies, chocolate s'mores, chocolate barks, chocolate clusters, chocolate popcorn and more? ? to Pflag.

Turkey Shoot, meanwhile, has launched an ?Ice Hut? stout, the sales from which will benefit the group.

?Much like a fine stout, the LGBTQ2 community is often misrepresented and misunderstood,? said Pflag York Region President Tristan Coolman. ?50 cents from each fill and pint purchase will be donated to Pflag York Region.?

Elsewhere, York Pride Fest continues its lineup of virtual programs through their website at [YorkPrideFest.com](http://YorkPrideFest.com) with some ?support local? initiatives of their own.

York Pride Fest has partnered with Newmarket's Cachet Supper Club for the distribution of Digital Pride Experience Boxes. Priced at \$40, these Experience Boxes go hand-in-hand with some select programs through June ? and they can even be enjoyed on their own.

?Cooking, eating and celebrating community together is the absolute best way to get to know someone,? says York Pride Fest. ?That is why Digital Pride has partnered with Cachet Supper Club and Delivereh to make it happen! It builds strong bonds and helps connect people in a special way that is sometimes impossible to explain. York Pride is all about teaching essential life skills to our community.

?York Pride wants to encourage you to eat healthier and have fun while doing it. We know the importance of eating a meal together, so we invite you to the kitchen to cook with us, eat with us and celebrate Pride like a true family.?

Experience Boxes, which will be ready for pickup on June 21, include ingredients to make your meal, a drink from an alcohol partner, and a special Zoom code to access ?the private kitchen chat so we can all cook and eat together live? ? and enjoy a cooking demonstration from Chef Ivan, a vegan-based chef from Toronto's La Bartola.

This week, Virtual Pride offers several opportunities for some safe, socially-distanced fun.

On Friday, the group will host a comedy night for the 19+ encouraging local comedy artists to ?represent their personal stories through a new level of sass, humour and attitude.

?Not only will this be an opportunity to relate with each other, but also create the perfect environment to read each other in a fun and playful way,? say organizers. ?The night will also feature a special performance from a local renowned 2SLGBTQ+ Canadian icon who is full of humour and has some wild performance skills. Since we are all in quarantine right now, I guess we will only be

making inside jokes for right now. So, grab your drinks, laugh a little, and join us for a comedic night unlike any other.?

A virtual dance off will be the order of the day on June 1 from 7 ? 9 p.m.

?In a world where dance is revered and dance-offs are scarce, only one team can reign superior! Voguing vs. Hip Hop. Two top tier styles. Digital Pride underlines the art of dance, how empowering it can be and how important it is to pursue your dreams in a fun and healthy way. Proving to anyone that you can accomplish anything you put your mind to.

?With tips and tricks along the way, this program will be sure to have you dancing alongside your favourite team! Move the coffee table and make sure you've got enough room to shake because Dance Off is about dance appreciation and what it really takes. Polling features through Twitter and will allow viewers to interact and vote.?

Ever wonder what it takes to be a drag queen? Start with the foundation in June 23 with a tutorial on Drag Queen Makeup.

?Now's your chance to learn from the Queens themselves! York Pride is the biggest fan of queer culture in its many forms. Drag Queens happen to be one of the many reasons why Pride exists in the first place. So, get your lashes glued and all those sparkly nails pressed as these Queens share their real and personal stories along with tips and tricks on how to create a successful drag career.

?We know the power of makeup and encourage you to send in your questions, pictures and videos of you in drag for your chance to win a Pride Makeup Bundle and be featured on this live event in front of thousands of faces! Don't forget to tell us your creative drag name. Bonus points if you can make our queens laugh!?

**By Brock Weir** Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter