

Diversity & Inclusion leaders celebrated by YRP and Portraits of Giving



Deeds speak louder than mere words for York Regional Police Sergeant Mina Rahravan and Communications Specialist Susan Gibbs.

Leaders within the YRP's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Bureau, they consistently live up to the YRP's motto of 'Deeds Speak' as they form partnerships and relations with the local 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Their deeds were celebrated last Thursday afternoon as the duo were honoured by Portraits of Giving, an annual exhibition by Richmond Hill photographer Karen Merk celebrating the people who give back and continue to build the Region.

Rahravan and Gibbs were honoured with a special presentation at the YRP's Aurora headquarters.

'Within the YRP, they have created important training for members through their Positive Spaces program and 2SLGBTQ+ Awareness sessions,' reads their citation. 'These initiatives bring together members across the organization to have open and honest conversations and foster a better understanding of the work that needs to be done to build positive and constructive community partnerships.

'Together, Mina and Susan's mission of creating safe spaces and events to encourage meaningful dialogues helps provide significant platforms for changing minds and opening hearts to human differences, in particular sexual diversity with respect to the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Shifting perspectives allows everyone to live fully and embrace their own uniqueness as a powerful asset.'

Paying tribute to the duo, YRP Chief Jim MacSween said they were 'fearless and tireless advocates for the Pride movement' and 'they bring out the best of us.'

'The work that is being done there (with Positive Spaces) has a significant impact not only on our organization but as each member I have been involved with,' he said. 'This is the foundation of what I believe the work around human rights is all about and something we should all be taking seriously. I'm extremely proud of the work they both do and will continue to do at YRP and out in the community.

'I really believe leadership is about leading from here. We can all be thoughtful in the way we lead but the work that both Susan and Mina are doing is really leading from the heart: doing what's right and having the courage to really stand up for those who are

sometimes vulnerable in the community and marginalized, and making us all understand what it really means to be in a great organization and taking the necessary steps forward to make us all better as an organization and as a community.?

Representing Mayor and Council at the occasion was Councillor Rachel Gilliland, who was recently re-elected to represent Ward 2, where she too paid tribute to the Positive Spaces initiative.

?The impact to the community is outstanding, creating an inclusive environment, understanding how important it is for people to have that place where they can feel at one with one another in inclusivity,? she said.

With Sergeant Rahravan unable to attend the ceremony, it was up to Gibbs to not only accept the recognition for both of them but to thank their team for their collective efforts towards building a more inclusive environment.

?Thank you for this and everything you do to highlight all the amazing work of all the nominees. I know at YRP we couldn't do half of what we do in the community without our volunteers. It is really great to see volunteers around the Region being recognized,? she said.

?We really could not have made the strides that we have without all of our [Pride team] members. What you don't get to hear is the voices behind these members. Whether they are a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community or whether they are an ally, their voices are just as meaningful, tactful and genuine. It doesn't matter if they are sharing their lived experiences to help educate, motivate and inspire others to live their authentic lives or if they're lending their support to a member in a time of need when they need it most. The reason we are grateful to make such a difference is because our collective voices come together in perfect harmony to promote inclusion and acceptance.?

For more information on Portraits of Giving, including 2022 honourees and where you can next see the exhibition, visit www.merkphotography.com/portraits-of-giving.

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