



May 16, 2024

JOINT STATEMENT FROM THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF DURHAM REGION

Every May and June, for the past six years, all Durham Region Public Libraries have partnered with Durham Children’s Aid Society and Youth Pride Durham to host our family-friendly community event, Drag Queen Storytime. Attended by children with their parents or caregivers, it features stories and songs that celebrate diversity and teaches love, inclusion, and acceptance in a safe space. Every library supports the program by providing space and marketing the events to our communities. In 2023, we were proud to receive the Ontario Library Association’s Les Fowlie Intellectual Freedom and Joyce Cunningham Library Boards of the Year Award for the collaborative efforts of hosting Drag Queen Storytime in Durham Region.

We recognize that Durham Region is home to individuals and families with unique perspectives, experiences, and values. Libraries deliver a range of programs and services that reflect and celebrate all members of our communities. We acknowledge that not every book on our shelf or program we offer will be a good fit for each resident. Programs are developed based on our knowledge of our community, and residents decide whether a program is a good fit for them and their family.

Many families in our community feel that Drag Queen Storytime speaks to their values. They express this through their continued attendance at the program every year and in their messages to us afterward. We know the program offers a meaningful experience and a safe space for children and parents to talk about inclusion.

Public libraries have always championed the values underpinning a democratic society including free, open, and equitable access to diverse information and ideas, civic engagement, intellectual freedom, and freedom of speech. The public library remains an institution that helps build understanding for one another by being a welcoming and inclusive public space for all.

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