



**HORSESHOE FALLS REGIONAL COUNCIL OF THE
UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**

Supports, Connects, Empowers Communities of Faith

Phone: 1-833-236-0280 / 905-659-3343

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 100, Carlisle, ON L0R 1H0

Website: www.hfrcucc.ca

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c/o Pflag Canada
1554 Carling Ave, Suite 243
Ottawa, ON K1Z 7M4
haltonon@pflagcanada.ca

The executive of Horseshoe Falls Region, one of sixteen regions of the United Church of Canada, which encompasses Halton Region, acknowledges and thanks to PFLAG of Halton for its work and support of students and teachers standing up for their right to feel safe at school. As Christians we recognize the historical and ongoing ties that bigotry, particularly homophobic and transphobic bigotry, have in Christianity, ties that we cannot ignore or discount.

The Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community have struggled for many years to be accepted, especially by people of faith. Christianity has treated the Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community, their relationships, and identities as sinful and wrong. Today, we come to you as a faith community that affirms and loves all people across the spectrums of gender and sexuality, faith community that cannot stand by and stay silent when those in our region are being shown hate for their identities and who they love. Throughout time, Christianity has been used as an excuse to perpetrate hate and bigotry, as far as using conversion therapies to modify behaviours and thoughts perceived as wrong or sinful.

As a community of faith, we stand strongly in support of the work PFLAG and the students and teachers have done. The executive of Horseshoe Falls Region stands with the students of the Halton Catholic Schools in raising a pride flag during the month of June for Pride month. We believe schools need to be safe spaces for young people to learn, grow and explore the world around them. They need to be safe places where young people can become self-aware and learn about their own physical, emotional, mental, and sexual selves. They need to be brave spaces where young people can be themselves without fear of abuse.

We stand together in supporting PFLAG and raising a rainbow flag as one significant way to support all students and staff who don't feel safe within the walls of their schools.

Thea Sheridan-Jonah, Chair of the Affirming Team at St. Paul's United Church in Oakville, ON
Deborah Laforet, Minister at St. Paul's United Church in Oakville, ON
On behalf of the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Region, United Church of Canada