



PRIDE house

2010 PRIDE house Legacy Report

Prepared for:

The 2010 PRIDE house Steering Committee

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Introduction

For the first time ever, PRIDE house pavilions in Vancouver and Whistler provided a welcoming space during the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games for the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, trans-identified / two spirited community and allies. These spaces brought the LGBT community and allies together to celebrate diversity and the achievements of their favourite Olympic and Paralympic athletes while raising awareness about the important work that still needs to be done to eliminate homophobia, particularly in the world of sport. Throughout the Games, more than 20,000 people visited one of the two PRIDE house pavilions (5,000 in Whistler and 2,000 at QMUNITY) or “SCORE” the celebration venue on Davie street(15,000), with hundreds more participating in a number of community outreach events. There is anecdotal evidence suggesting the PRIDE house pavilions were the third most reported story of the Olympics as they received over one hundred million references through TV, radio, print and electronic (social media, blogs, eNews, etc.) media coverage.

In less than twelve months, a small but dedicated group of individuals collaborated to make the first ever Olympic and Paralympic PRIDE house pavilions a success. As a legacy to future host organizations, most notably the 2012 and 2014 Olympics and Paralympics, as well as the 2015 PanAm Games here in Canada (Toronto and the Golden Horseshoe), the PRIDE house Steering Committee is committed to capturing the successes and learnings from their experiences in the report. As was the case throughout the planning and delivery of the 2010 PRIDE house pavilions, preparation of this report was a collaborative effort involving all members of the Steering Committee.

This report provides only a snapshot of the successes and learnings from the first ever PRIDE houses. More detailed information about PRIDE house experiences and the media stories generated before, during, and after the Games can be accessed at the PRIDE house website at <http://www.pridehouse.ca/>.

Origins and Objectives

Dean Nelson, the visionary behind the first ever Olympic PRIDE houses, first conceived of having a PRIDE house in Whistler for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games in late 2008. As a social entrepreneur, and the Executive Producer of the successful Gay Whistler Ski Week, Dean initiated discussions with the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) and unofficial supportive Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC) contacts. By April 2009, a venue was secured and in May of that year, a press release was issued at the International Gay Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) world conference in Toronto to officially launch PRIDE house Whistler. From that point on, Dean worked tirelessly to make PRIDE house Whistler a reality.

Having heard of PRIDE house Whistler, senior officials from the City of Vancouver expressed support for also having a PRIDE house within the city boundaries. Based on this support, Marion Lay, an Olympic medallist in swimming, and a well known and respected sport leader in Vancouver, drew together a small group of interested people, including Dean Nelson, to participate on the PRIDE house Steering Committee and jointly plan for the two pavilions. The first PRIDE house Steering Committee meeting was held on July 22, 2009.

As detailed on the website¹, the mission of PRIDE house was “to provide an open and welcoming venue for the LGBT community and their allies to celebrate together diversity and inclusiveness through sport. To educate and make aware that LGBT people are still discriminated against and in some cases persecuted for being or assumed to be a homosexual. It is still illegal to be gay in over seventy countries around the world and in seven countries the punishment for being gay is death.”

PRIDE house intended to:

- provide a celebratory and welcoming venue for the LGBT community to connect, seek support, and have fun
- provide information on upcoming LGBT events, conferences, and festivals
- provide outreach and/or support materials and/or contacts such as EGALE, Rainbow Refuge, LEGIT, Federation of Gay Games, OUT Games, and the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS)-Addressing Homophobia in Sport initiative
- create incredible memories as one of the hippest and ‘kewlest’ place to gather during the Olympic and Paralympic Games

The primary objectives for PRIDE house were to:

- have fun, celebrate our authentic selves, embrace diversity and be inclusive
- educate and evoke change on homophobia in the sports culture
- be a catalyst for Human Rights to protect gays and lesbians in countries of conflict where governments have laws that openly discriminate against homosexuals

Also described on the website are the three core values at the heart of PRIDE house:

- being Authentic
- celebrating Diversity
- embracing Inclusiveness

PRIDE house was intended to be significant especially to citizens from nations such as India, Iran, Jamaica, Ukraine, and 65+ other countries where it is still ILLEGAL to be a homosexual and in over 70 countries where the crime of being gay or thought to be gay is punishable by DEATH. We are very fortunate to live in Canada and the U.S. where, for the most part, gays and lesbians are treated with respect and dignity, when in other parts of the world they are not. PRIDE house aims to provide those citizens whose human rights are being denied a welcoming space to find likeminded people, valuable support, and encouragement. How incredible is it to help even one athlete, coach, friend, or family find the support network they need to be true to themselves. Now, that is something to be proud of.²

¹ Accessed at <http://www.pridehouse.ca/AboutPRIDEhouse/tabid/75/Default.aspx>

² Ibid.

Planning Model

The joint planning for the two PRIDE house pavilions began in June 2009, with the establishment of the PRIDE house Steering Committee. The Steering Committee reflected a cross-section of leaders in the LGBT community:

- 1) *Gay Whistler* –the originator of the PRIDE house concept and vision, and the lead for all PRIDE house events in Whistler. Gay Whistler also oversaw some of the special events in Vancouver, including the PRIDE house Movie Nights, and assisted with “Got to be OUT Here” at the B.C. Canada House with the Olympic Secretariat
- 2) *QMUNITY* – B.C.’s queer resource centre in Vancouver serves the lesbian, gay, trans, bi and queer community. The Executive Director chaired the Steering Committee and QMUNITY itself was the location of the Vancouver PRIDE house pavilion.
- 3) *Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS)* – as the national organization committed to achieving an equitable sport and physical activity system for girls and women, CAAWS is working to make sport more welcoming to sexual diversity through its Addressing Homophobia in Sport initiative. The Executive Director of CAAWS, Karin Lofstrom and the Program Lead for the Addressing Homophobia in Sport initiative, Jennifer Birch-Jones, participated on the Steering Committee and were involved in all Education and Outreach initiatives on homophobia in sport.
- 4) *Rainbow Refugee Committee and LEGIT: Canadian Immigration for Same-Sex partners* – these Vancouver-based volunteer driven organizations support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or HIV+ refugee claimants and refugees.
- 5) *Egale and IGLA* – Helen Kennedy, the Executive Director of Egale Canada, a national organization that advances equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-identified people and their families, participated on the Steering Committee. She also provided a link to the International Lesbian and Gay Association.
- 6) *ProMOTION Plus* – the B.C. organization dedicated to increasing opportunities for girls and women in the sport and recreation delivery system.
- 7) *Members at Large* – additional members of the Steering Committee had significant experience and networks within the sport community, from the international level down to the local community.

Members of the Steering Committee met (in-person and through teleconference) for one and a half to two hours approximately every three weeks, with shorter intervals between meetings in January and February, just prior to the start of the 2010 Olympics. A smaller Media Committee was also created.

The formation and operation of the Steering Committee was an essential component of PRIDE house success. The diversity and expertise of the members ensured a variety of voices and access to a wide array of LGBT resources (in the form of people and their networks, rather than money). Having members with sport expertise and knowledge of the Olympic and Paralympic systems was also vital.

PRIDE house Pavilions

Whistler:

The original vision for PRIDE house Whistler was to create a welcoming environment where the LGBT community and allies could gather, at a central meeting point, to watch the Games and then go off to other venues and events. This was seen to be especially important for Whistler as the village did not yet have a designated “gay space”. PRIDE house ensured everyone felt included in celebrating these Games. This pavilion also provided an opportunity to be public and create dialogue on homophobia. More importantly, PRIDE house acknowledged the “Pink Elephants” in the room that are rarely recognized - the LGBT athletes, coaches, and trainers that are largely invisible in the homophobic world of sport.

The PRIDE house venue was located in the Pan Pacific Village Centre which was selected for its good street level access, visibility to the outside public, and the ability to transform / decorate the space to become PRIDE house. The venue also required a bar area to attract guests to watch the Games and multiple TV screens/monitors to broadcast Games coverage on multiple networks.

A bright colourful entrance and a strong sense of arrival was a key component to PRIDE house Whistler. Future pavilions will need to ensure they have attention-grabbing graphics at the entrance as this is an important photo opportunity for guests and celebrities and will help create the mood and expectation of the pavilion.

The artistic and educational exhibits were a key component of the Whistler PRIDE house as they helped promote dialogue on human rights violations and really showcase the various aspects of Queer Culture. These exhibits helped transform the venue from being just another sports bar / lounge, albeit an LGBT one, into a real Olympic pavilion. Space for the sale of retail items was also created at the pavilion. This space gave visitors the opportunity to buy PRIDE house souvenirs and generate some additional revenue. The selling of retail items also provided PRIDE house sponsors the opportunity to get their branding out and into people’s hands.

A Speakers’ Chalet was also established as quiet space to conduct interviews and record messages, thoughts, and ideas around PRIDE house or other venues and events. Looking back, it would also have been helpful to have a separate office or administration space so that the Venue Manager could blog, Facebook, email, return telephone calls, and strategize for press conferences in private. Working in the main venue room was difficult, as it was a very busy and social space.

If future funding permits, having a stage area for performances or lectures similar to other pavilions would be ideal. Additionally, having separate spaces for the “clubbers” and the “television watchers” would be helpful. At the Whistler venue, all visitors were together in one room so it was difficult to know whether guests wanted more of a quiet lounge space to watch the Games on the television, or if they preferred more of a club scene, with dance music replacing the television audio.



Dean Nelson, creator of PRIDE house at the grand entrance of the Whistler PRIDE house pavilion at the Pan Pacific Village Centre. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Birch-Jones.



PRIDE house Whistler watches Canadian skeleton medalist Jon Montgomery receive his gold medal. Photo courtesy of Heather Kitching. Accessed at <http://outqnews.wordpress.com/2010/02/24/olympic-pride-house-movie-night-addresses-homophobia-in-sport/#more-791>

Vancouver:

PRIDE house Vancouver was hosted by and within QMUNITY, B.C.'s Queer Resource Centre, and therefore had a different feel from PRIDE house Whistler, which was built for the specific purpose of being a PRIDE pavilion. PRIDE house Vancouver at QMUNITY was located in the heart of Davie Street, Vancouver's easily identifiable gay neighbourhood, and just a stroll away from Live City Yaletown, Live City Downtown and many of the other pavilions and houses. As Vancouver has a vibrant and identifiable LGTB neighbourhood with many bars, restaurants and stores, the Steering Committee determined that it was not necessary to create a separate queer social space, but rather, focus on creating a venue that was wholly queer, safe and informative. The idea was that PRIDE house Vancouver would be a place at which queer athletes, families, fans and visitors could meet and find resources and support, in a low-key / low-pressure queer space.

The TV in the Vancouver PRIDE house lounge area regularly attracted people who wanted a low-key space to watch the events. There was also a leader board keeping track of national medal counts which the regular visitors enjoyed updating themselves. The Canadian men's and women's hockey games, as well as all gold medal events, specifically attracted large crowds of visitors.

One of the challenges of having PRIDE house Vancouver at QMUNITY was that regular programs, meetings, drop-ins and workshops continued to operate in and around PRIDE house festivities. As such, QMUNITY staff time was split between PRIDE house and regular programming. Having two sets of programs running at the same time also made it difficult to discern how many visitors stopped in specifically for PRIDE house. Some visitors came in for QMUNITY services and then took part in PRIDE house activities, and some PRIDE house visitors chose to take part in QMUNITY programming which made for an interesting cross-pollination.



At PRIDE house Vancouver (QMUNITY), Jennifer Breakspear (standing), the Executive Director and PRIDE house pavilion manager and guests are on the edge of their seats watching the Canada vs USA men's hockey final. Photo courtesy of Heather Kitching. Accessed at <http://outqnews.wordpress.com/2010/03/01/olympic-pride-house-the-final-hours/>

Unfortunately, the PRIDE house pavilion at QMUNITY was not accessible to all persons with restricted mobility as it was located on the second floor of a building without an elevator. Although alternative accessible locations were explored by the Steering Committee, none were financially and / or logistically feasible. Looking ahead, a completely accessible PRIDE house venue is critical.

Finally, SCORE, a sports bar on Davie street in Vancouver's Gay Village, was designated the official PRIDE house celebration venue and hosted a number of special events which were very popular (e.g., opening and closing ceremonies, gold medal hockey matches). The bar and their events however, ran independently of PRIDE house Vancouver. Future PRIDE house pavilions should work to collaborate with all PRIDE activities, events, and organizations in the area.

Liaison

As PRIDE house was a private event and not an official affiliated property of the Olympics, “official” approvals from VANOC were not needed. The decision to not seek official partnership / venue status with VANOC was deliberate. Being under the VANOC official partner/venue umbrella would have significantly restricted what products could be used, and who PRIDE house partners could be (especially in terms of sponsorship). Staying away from “official” Olympic status also allowed for a faster decision making process and more creative licensing, while avoiding a huge marketing / licensing fee. However, having strong allies within VANOC who could provide advice on how to successfully navigate the Olympic “waters” was tremendously helpful in avoiding potential conflicts.

Ongoing liaison with RMOW, the City of Vancouver and the respective local Tourism Authorities on PRIDE house activities also helped in identifying possible opportunities and / or pitfalls. Additionally, these three organizations helped spread the word about PRIDE house within their own organizations.

Liaisons with the City of Vancouver’s Lesbian, Gay, Transgendered, Transsexual, Bisexual, Queer Advisory Committee (LGTTBQ), as well as the merchants on Davie Street in the Gay Village, were also established to raise awareness of the PRIDE house initiative.

Resourcing

The human resourcing model for the two venues differed somewhat. In Whistler, volunteers were severely limited as most of the human resource base was already committed to full time jobs and/or volunteering for the Olympics and Paralympics themselves. As a result, the two leads at PRIDE house Whistler worked almost non-stop during the Olympic Games period. PRIDE house Vancouver, on the other hand, utilised QMUNITY staff and recruited PRIDE house Ambassadors who committed to working four to six hour shifts on site to answer questions, provide resources, and keep the coffee fresh. A number of QMUNITY employees, however, still put in extremely long hours to ensure that at least one staff member was onsite during PRIDE house hours of operation.

Looking ahead, having a small number of paid staff supplemented by volunteers would help avoid having anyone work long shifts during the Games, and would reduce the potential for burnout. Future PRIDE houses will benefit by starting their recruitment efforts earlier and by having a clearer understanding of volunteer tasks and needs. Key PRIDE house components that require volunteers include:

- Set up, decorating, and putting the PRIDE house together
- Media Launch / Press Conferences / Grand Opening
- Daily Hosts
- Village Roamers to wander the various areas and direct people towards the pavilion. We found that many people wanted to visit PRIDE house but could not find it or got distracted by something else along the way
- Social Media- bloggers, Facebookers, Twitters, YouTube, etc.
- Tear Down

Revenue Generation

The short lead time made revenue generation challenging. Despite this, PRIDE house was able to attract a number of sponsors who donated in-kind resources or products. In addition, PRIDE house successfully applied for a \$4,000 grant from the City of Vancouver. Both PRIDE house pavilions also had a small range of merchandise for sale. The official PRIDE house pins for Whistler and Vancouver were the most popular item (cost of \$1.00 and retailed for \$5.00), with Vancouver selling out of their five hundred pins in the first week. Although “pins” and “pin trading” are very popular at the Olympics, it was difficult to know how many pins to order in advance. In Whistler, other popular PRIDE house items were hats, mittens, scarves, and shot glasses. The logo’ed shirts and jackets would likely have been more popular if they had official Olympic branding. Indeed, PRIDE house Vancouver is still trying to sell their surplus t-shirts. Looking ahead, it would make sense to focus on popular low price items (i.e., pins) rather than higher priced items (i.e. shirts and jackets). Another option to consider in the future is working with a major retailer / merchandiser on a basis of royalty fees to avoid the investment and risk of merchandise.

The most significant costs for the Whistler PRIDE house pavilion were the venue rental and the furniture package for outfitting the venue. The next major cost was in labour, most of which was volunteered. Other significant costs included insurance (in particular the unexpected cost of having to secure insurance at the last minute for PRIDE house Vancouver’s Opening Ceremonies - almost a thousand dollars for a one hour event), marketing collateral (including sponsor banners and PRIDE house signage), storage costs, truck rental/transport, housing/travel of celebrity guests, and bar hosting at select events. A donation jar at PRIDE house Vancouver (on the table at the beverage station) brought in a very small amount of “pocket change”.

One of the most significant learnings concerned the lost revenue opportunity with not having a bar on-site at QMUNITY. Although SCORE on Davie was the official celebration venue (and indeed had over 15,000 visitors during the Games), PRIDE house organisers were unable to secure an agreement with SCORE to have a small percentage of SCORE’s revenue donated back to the PRIDE houses to help offset their costs, including the PRIDE house banners used by SCORE. Looking ahead, there are opportunities to maximise revenue generation by hosting a number of “themed social” special events throughout the Games at a licensed venue that has access to multiple large television screens.

It is hoped that securing sponsorship for future PRIDE houses will be easier now that the concept is a reality. For the 2010 PRIDE house, the novelty of the concept made it difficult for sponsors to understand how ground breaking and revolutionary the pavilions were.

Looking back, having an integrated budget would also have been helpful. While major budget decisions were made by the Steering Committee, a lot of the financial details were left to the leads for the Whistler and Vancouver PRIDE houses. Although there was a very high level of trust among the Steering Committee members, including the two venue leads, an integrated budget would have provided a better understanding of the overall revenues and costs.

Education and Outreach

There were two main components to the education and outreach programming; 1) raising awareness about homophobia, particularly homophobia in sport, and 2) providing refugee and asylum support services.

Homophobia:

There were a number of program initiatives related to addressing homophobia in sport, prior to and during the Games.

- 1) Raising Awareness with AthletesCAN (the national association for high performance athletes) and the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) – Prior to the Games, The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) worked closely with two of Canada’s leading sport organizations to raise awareness about homophobia in sport and to highlight the roles these organizations can play in creating welcoming environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-identified/two-spirited (LGBT) athletes, coaches, officials and others. This included a ninety minute awareness raising session at AthleteCAN’s Annual Forum held in Richmond in October 2009, and with the COC’s Senior Leads for the 2010 Team Canada Mission staff in November 2009. Hosting the Games here in Canada and creating the PRIDE houses provided an opportunity to have these important conversations with these organizations sooner rather than later. Although it was hoped to have a similar session with the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC), there was not sufficient organizational capacity within CPC to add this to their pre-Games preparation.
- 2) Jeff Sheng’s “Fearless” Exhibition – In partnership with St. Paul’s Hospital Foundation for the British Columbia Centre of Excellence in HIV/AIDS, PRIDE house commissioned Jeff Sheng to add Canadian athletes to his “Fearless” photo exhibit. This powerful series of photographs documents young American and Canadian high school and college athletes who openly identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender and are openly “out” to their predominantly straight teammates and coaches. The “Fearless” exhibit was on display at the PRIDE house pavilion in Whistler during the Olympics and Paralympics, with a mini-exhibit on display at the PRIDE house pavilion at QMUNITY in Vancouver. Jeff Sheng was also on site to discuss his photo exhibit in Whistler on February 19th and 20th and at QMUNITY on February 21st, 2010.
- 3) Exploring the Physical Activity Needs of Older Lesbian Women (55-70) – On February 11, 2010, as part of their Physical Activity and Women Aged 55-70 program, CAAWS hosted a day of conversation with older self-identified lesbian, bi-sexual and two-spirited women about being physically active in Vancouver.
- 4) ILGA Winter Olympic Map – ILGA created a special version of their world “rights” map to present the discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex persons in the countries participating in the Winter Olympics. The Vancouver Pride Society, with ILGA, created large banners of the map and posted them in the Whistler and Vancouver PRIDE house pavilions.



(L) Jeff Sheng, creator of the photography series *Fearless* in front of the *Fearless* exhibit of Canadian athletes commissioned for the 2010 PRIDE house and on display at the Whistler PRIDE house pavilion. Photo courtesy of Heather Kitching. Accessed at <http://outqnews.wordpress.com/2010/02/>. Right: the *Fearless* exhibit at the Whistler PRIDE house pavilion. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Birch-Jones.

5) Homophobia Film Nights – Two film nights were held during the Olympics, in partnership with Out on Screen and the Vancouver Queer Film Festival. Both evenings were hosted by Mark Tewksbury, and included films and a community panel discussion, followed by a reception. The first night, sponsored by CAAWS, focused on the impact of homophobia in sport on women, and included the screening of the films “A Knock Out” and “Training Rules”. The second night, sponsored by Parents and Families of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Canada, screened the film “Beyond Pride: The Politics of Pride”. Between 150-200 people attended each film night.³

6) Other Artist’s Programming – Three other artists were involved with PRIDE house. In September 2009, local Whistler artist, Catherine Pulleyblank, was commissioned to create the logo for PRIDE house to embody the spirit of a pavilion that celebrates diversity, embraces inclusiveness and creates an opportunity for dialogue on homophobia. Inspired by the paintings of Cori Ross, the PRIDE house logo makes use of simple lines and bold colours to embody the Sea to Sky corridor while conveying the spirit of celebrating the diversity of people in the full spectrum of the rainbow.⁴

The bronze sculpture of a nude hockey player entitled “*Slapshotolus; Ancient Greek Olympic Sculpture Meets Modern Canadian Sport Medium*” was on display at the PRIDE house pavilion in

³ For more details, see <http://outqnews.wordpress.com/2010/02/24/olympic-pride-house-movie-night-addresses-homophobia-in-sport/>

⁴ For more details, see <http://www.pridehouse.ca/PRIDEhouseArtists/PRIDEhouselogoCatherinePulleyblank/tabid/83/Default.aspx>

Whistler. Edmund Haakonson, the Edmonton based artist, was also onsite for a few days at the Whistler pavilion to discuss his sculpture with visitors.⁵

Lastly, a section of the 1.25-mile rainbow flag sewn by Gilbert Baker for the 2003 Key West Pride Festival, was displayed at the Whistler PRIDE house pavilion. The Key West flag was a recreation of the original rainbow flag, which was created to replace the pink triangle symbol from Nazi Germany that has been used by gays for many years, at the request of Mr. Baker's good friend, the late Harvey Milk.⁶

Reflecting back on the programming, a number of key learnings emerge. First of all, with more lead time, a number of opportunities for community-based events or initiatives with other partner organizations could have been pursued. As a result of the short lead time, there was not a lot of formal programming, particularly at the Vancouver pavilion. There was also a missed opportunity to involve Vancouver's three universities and community colleges. Although there were initial discussions on hosting an LGBT "cafe" event with local academics and community-based practitioners, this event was not pursued due to resource constraints (both people and dollars).

With more lead time, future initiatives could potentially access arts and culture funding associated with the event. Both the Olympics and Paralympics have a significant cultural program (and budget) which includes grants to a wide range of artists. For example, the Cultural Olympiad for the 2010 Games included "BASH'd: A Gay Rap Opera" in Vancouver during the Olympic Games.

For some visitors it was not enough for PRIDE house to be a space to connect, recharge, get information, and watch the Games on TV. These visitors wanted (and indeed may have expected) more in the way of entertainment and / or interactive displays like those found in abundance at most, if not all, of the official Olympic houses or pavilions.

Finally, there was not sufficient programming targeting two-spirited, trans, and queer youth. Although PRIDE house was all about being inclusive, having representation of these groups on the Steering Committee, with responsibility for targeted programming, would have been beneficial.

Asylum and Refugee Support:

Education and outreach programming also included outreach on Canadian immigration and refugee protection for LGBT people. Two community groups, Rainbow Refugee Committee (RRC) and Canadian Immigration for Same-Sex partners (LEGIT), organized and staffed this component of outreach. LEGIT⁷ has been an active support and advocacy group for LGBT immigration rights since 1992. The RRC⁸ was formed in 2000 as LEGIT was receiving an increasing number of refugee related inquiries and has been holding support and information drop-ins at QMUNITY since 2001.

⁵ For more details, see <http://www.pridehouse.ca/PRIDEhouseArtists/EdmundHaakosonsSlapshotolus/tabid/65/Default.aspx>

⁶ For more details, see <http://www.pridehouse.ca/PRIDEhouseArtists/GilbertBakersPride/tabid/66/Default.aspx>

⁷ For more details, see www.legit.ca.

⁸ For more details, see www.rainbbowrefugee.ca.

The purpose of the partnership with these organizations was two-fold; 1) raise awareness about the continued persecution facing LGBT persons outside of Canada; and 2) offer refugees and asylum seekers support services. During the planning phase, PRIDE house Steering Committee members tried to anticipate the kinds of questions people might have as part of a dialogue on homophobia. Given the large number of visitors, temporary workers, athletes, and families travelling to Canada, LGBT immigration or refugee related inquiries were likely. Moreover, there were more than 14 countries participating in the Winter Olympics and Paralympics where LGBT people face persecution or are not protected by their states from violent forms of homophobia or transphobia. It is also not widely known that Canada has recognized same-sex partnerships for immigration and has, for over a decade, provided refugee protection to persecuted LGBT persons. Through their work with LGBT immigrants and refugees, Rainbow Refugee and LEGIT are well aware of the toll that invisibility of rights and information has on people's relationships and lives. As such, PRIDE house was a wonderful opportunity to raise awareness of these issues and provide LGBT people from other countries accurate information about their options should they wish to immigrate or seek asylum in Canada.

The preparation by Rainbow Refugee/LEGIT members to support PRIDE house entailed the following:

- Through their participation in the Red Cross Multi-Agency Partnership (MAP), RRC spoke with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) representatives about what procedures and operations would be in place during the Olympic/Paralympic Games. Also within the framework of MAP, RRC participated in strategizing emergency shelter options for the Games period.
- RRC researched country specific conditions related to homophobic or transphobic persecution in the nations participating in the Olympic/Paralympic Games. In collaboration with EGALÉ, this information was compiled for PRIDE house immigration outreach volunteers (in detailed format) and PRIDE house Ambassadors (a general overview).
- RRC provided training to all PRIDE house Ambassadors on how to sensitively field immigration related inquiries. The Ambassadors were therefore able to determine if questions were urgent or non-urgent. All RRC/LEGIT volunteers were well versed on refugee and immigration options for LGBT people.

RRC and LEGIT volunteers were available daily at the PRIDE house at QMUNITY from 4-6 pm to provide immigration and refugee information. PRIDE house Ambassadors were also provided with the on-call numbers for RRC/LEGIT volunteers for when they were unable to determine urgent versus non-urgent questions. When this situation occurred, the on-call RRC/LEGIT volunteer was called or visitors were asked to provide contact information and return during the designated hours. A quiet room with a phone was also set aside for immigration matters and/or psychosocial support.

Displays about the immigration and refugee outreach efforts were posted prominently at the PRIDE house pavilion in Vancouver and handouts and materials were displayed at the PRIDE house pavilion in Whistler. At the Vancouver PRIDE house pavilion, RRC/LEGIT volunteers also wore PRIDE house Ambassador t-shirts, and wore name tags with "immigration questions?" clearly written.

Immigration and refugee issues were of particular interest to the media. Two of the RRC/LEGIT volunteers were designated to handle media inquiries. Media tended to focus on the remote, but sensational, possibility that an athlete would make a refugee claim based on sexual orientation. Refugee Rainbow and LEGIT worked to refocus on the importance of promoting knowledge and access to immigration rights for LGBT persons.

During the Olympic Games period, RRC and LEGIT handled nine immigration/refugee inquiries and two inquiries during the Paralympic Games. None of the inquirers were Olympic or Paralympic athletes. Of the eleven inquiries, seven were regarding cross-border LGBT relationships and partner sponsorship. The four refugee related inquiries were made by people who had not travelled to Canada for the Olympic or Paralympic Games, but had heard about Rainbow Refugee through PRIDE house publicity. Additionally, during the break between the Olympic and Paralympic Games, RRC had several inquiries from people who had heard about the organization through PRIDE house coverage. Contact was made through either QMUNITY or RRC directly. As such, the increased visibility and access to support created by the immigration and refugee outreach at PRIDE house extended beyond the immediate Olympic and Paralympic Games. The online and other media coverage in 72 countries around the globe also raised international awareness of immigration and refugee protection for LGBT persons in Canada.

Other Special Events

There were a number of special events held at the Whistler and Vancouver PRIDE house pavilions, which were well attended by both politicians and press, particularly in Vancouver. In addition, PRIDE house worked with the B.C. Olympic Secretariat and Tourism Vancouver to host the first ever LGBTQ night during an Olympic Games. When asked about why it was important to host a night specifically for the LGBT community, Philip Steenkamp, the host and CEO of the B.C. Olympic and Paralympic Games Secretariat, replied:

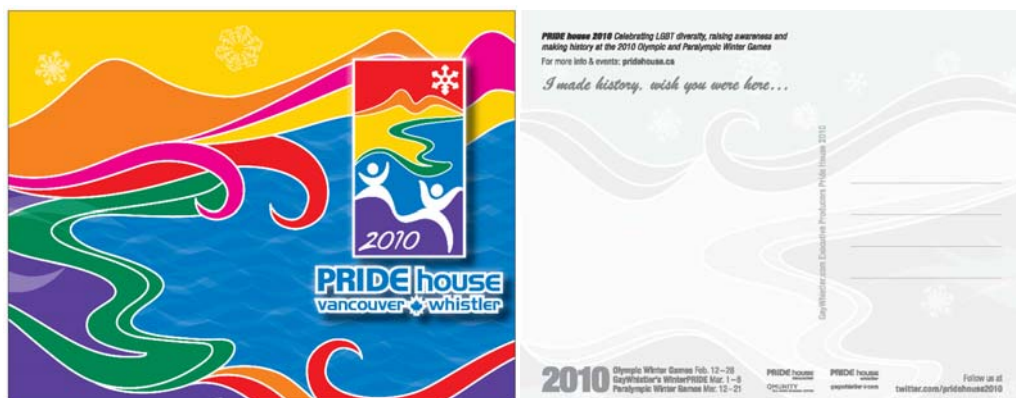
“We’re wanting to showcase Vancouver and British Columbia and Canada, and the LGBT community’s a vibrant part of our society here. Really we want to celebrate our diversity and the tolerance of our culture and also showcase ourselves to the world. There’s also kind of a business imperative here. Gay tourism is worth 60 billion dollars in the U.S., so there’s some good business networking that can occur. But aside from that, it’s just a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate those Canadian values of tolerance and diversity and what creates such strength in our culture here.”⁹

Looking ahead, the gay tourism angle provides an important opportunity to partner with, showcase, and celebrate the “gay side” of a host city as a means of attracting the gay traveller and sport enthusiast.

⁹ Heather Kitching. *Olympic PRIDE house: Government throws a party for the gays ...* Accessed at <http://outqnews.wordpress.com/2010/02/20/olympic-pride-house-government-throws-a-party-for-the-gays/>

Communications

A multi-faceted and extensive communications strategy was absolutely integral to the success of PRIDE house. Led by a small Media Committee, the strategy encompassed: pre-promotion at various events such as the Outgames LGBT Human Rights Conference in Copenhagen in 2009 and the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) Conference in Toronto in 2009, news stories and interviews prior to and during the Games through multiple social communication channels, a dedicated website, a PRIDE house postcard, and high profile out Olympians, Mark Tewksbury and Marion Lay, as media spokespeople.



2010 PRIDE house Postcards Available in Both of Canada's Official Languages

One aspect of communications that was challenging throughout the entire process was generating information in both of Canada's official languages, as well as other languages¹⁰. There was no funding for translation, nor were the PRIDE house spokespeople bilingual. As a result, with a few exceptions, most of the information posted or printed as well as the media interviews were in English. Looking ahead, having sufficient bilingual capacity (people, dollars, and time) will be important for future planning, especially in Canada.

Media Kit:

Much of the pre-event promotion was conducted by Dean Nelson, through a variety of channels including: posting articles and news stories on the website, proactively pitching stories to media outlets, responding to interview requests, and sharing posted story links on Facebook and Twitter. A media kit was developed by the Media Committee and launched prior to the Games. This kit included: Frequently Asked Questions (and answers) about PRIDE house, media contacts, promotional materials for the film nights and visiting artist exhibits, a list of sponsors/partners, and a link to the website, www.pridehouse.ca.

¹⁰ Inquiries were also made for information in Spanish, Japanese, Mandarin and German.

As demonstrated by the diverse sources and sheer number of articles posted on the PRIDE house website, the interest from mainstream media around the world was quite phenomenal. Two respected, high profile, out Canadian Olympic medallists, Mark Tewksbury and Marion Lay, were very generous with their time, making themselves available in Vancouver for interviews as the PRIDE house media spokespeople, and by participating in many of the PRIDE house special events. While the media was most interested in knowing which participating Olympic athletes were “out”, the Steering Committee made a conscious decision to try and deflect media attention away from the very few out athletes competing at the Games in the hopes of sparing them unwanted media attention during their preparation for, and performance in, the most important competition of their lives.

Looking back, the volume of the media interest in PRIDE house was somewhat surprising. As mentioned earlier, there was anecdotal evidence suggesting that the PRIDE house story was the third most reported story of the Olympics and that it received over one hundred million references through TV, radio, print and electronic (social media, blogs, eNews, etc.) media coverage. PRIDE house was certainly a novelty news story and initial media interest served to generate more media interest. PRIDE house received emails from people around the world who had heard about the pavilions through their own country’s media reports. These emails included questions about PRIDE house, Canada’s immigration system, and not surprisingly, questions about where to get PRIDE house pins!

A visit to the PRIDE house pavilion at QMUNITY by American political satirist Stephen Colbert (from Comedy Central's the Colbert Report) to film a segment for his daily Vancouver Olympic television broadcasts was certainly a highlight of the Games and offered an unprecedented degree of coverage for PRIDE house, through the television broadcast itself and subsequent viewings on You Tube.

Not being able to spread the word about PRIDE house to the LGBT team members directly, either through the Host Organizing Committee or through the respective National Olympic Committees (NOCs), made promotional work more challenging. Before the Games, PRIDE house information was spread through more traditional LGBTQ avenues, such as ILGA and their international network, the queer media, as well as multiple other communication mechanisms. Being included on the official list of Olympic and Paralympic “pavilions” in Vancouver and Whistler was a tremendous visibility boost as it meant that both the name and location of the two PRIDE house pavilions were included on all of the “official” pavilion maps posted on websites and in the print media. Indeed, a number of parents of LGBT youth arrived with official pavilion maps “in hand” with directions from their children to pick up a PRIDE house pin.

Indeed, it was the official Olympic pavilion map that produced another PRIDE house highlight. Canadian Olympic team members John Montgomery and Darla Deschamps heard about PRIDE house through the official pavilion map and then saw the entrance way when in the Whistler Village. Both made a point of visiting the PRIDE house in Whistler, after John’s gold medal performance, to show their support. While visiting the pavilion, Montgomery also demonstrated his skills as an auctioneer, selling off a handful of Olympic souvenirs to raise money for the Whistler Adaptive Sports Society.



l-r: 1992 Olympic gold medalist Mark Tewksbury, PRIDE house's Dean Nelson, Slapshotolus, Canadian women's skeleton team member (and Jon's girlfriend), Darla Deschamps, Jon Montgomery, and PRIDE house's Ken Coolen. Photo courtesy of Heather Kitching. Accessed at <http://outqnews.wordpress.com/2010/02/25/olympic-pride-house-staff-stand-up-for-johnny-weir-at-press-conference/>

Looking ahead, getting the word out about PRIDE house to the members of the Olympic and Paralympic teams through the Host Organizing Committee via the NOCs would be invaluable. Similarly, having access to a Communications Officer from each participating NOC would make it easier to get in touch athletes, should the need arise. For example, when the Johnny Weir story broke with the homophobic comments made by a couple of reporters during the 2010 Olympic Games, PRIDE house Media Leads were unable to ask Johnny Weir whether he wished to make a comment though the PRIDE house communication mechanism in addition to calling his own press conference with the mainstream media.

Website:

The dedicated website was the one-stop for all information related to PRIDE house. Early PRIDE house content was developed by, and situated on GayWhistler.com as early as May 2009. In Late November, the Steering Committee was successful in obtaining a valuable sponsoring partner, Susan Dodge, of Dodge Ink Inc., whose company specializes in website design and development. On short notice and at no cost, Susan worked with the PRIDE house Web Leads (three members of the Planning Committee) to design, launch, and continually update the dedicated PRIDE house website. Officially launched in late January 2010, the website was a comprehensive source of information, including the following major content:

- About PRIDE house - general description
- Calendar of Events - a list of LGBT events at the PRIDE house pavilions in Vancouver and Whistler, and in the community during the Olympics and Paralympics
- PRIDE house Vancouver description
- PRIDE house Whistler description
- Partners' and sponsors' names and logos with links
- Online Resources;

- Gay and Lesbian Rights Map (IGLA)
- Homophobia in Sport
- Hotel - Online Reservations
- LGBT Social Services
- Out Olympians and Athletes
- PRIDE house Artists
- PRIDE house in the News - articles by others in the media on PRIDE house
- LGBT News - items of interest to LGBT
- Media Room - same content as the Press Kit, but included trailers for the community night movies.

Despite the relatively short timeframe to re-design and re-launch the dedicated PRIDE house site, web statistics indicate that the website was widely visited by people from all over the world immediately prior to and during the Games:

- there were a total of 17,703 visitors to the site, between February and July 2010, the majority of whom visited during February (71%) and March (15%), during the Olympic and Paralympic Game periods
- of these visitors, 76% were “unique” generating an average of 2.66 page views and remaining on the site for approximately two and a half minutes
- the visitors to the site originated from 67 countries / territories, the majority being from Canada (73%), the United States (15%), Germany (2%), Austria (1%), Netherlands (0.75%), United Kingdom (0.75%), France (0.75%), Australia (0.05%) and Japan (0.05%)
- 25% of visitors came to the site through direct traffic, 39% were from referring sites, and 35% were from search engines.

The comprehensive website content, especially the resources and the list of out athletes, were extremely valuable. The website also provided excellent visibility to PRIDE house's partners and sponsors.

Looking back, there were a number of key learnings around the website:

- To maximize media interest in PRIDE house and the Games, an early design and launch of a comprehensive website is critical. Once launched, updating the website is vital, especially during the Games period. To effectively maintain the website, a clear content management strategy (who, when and what to include), and knowledgeable persons to update the site on a daily basis are necessary.
- While managing and updating the website is critical to success, it is also very labour intensive. This task was done on a part-time basis by three or four different people, including the Webmaster. Looking ahead, having someone dedicated to and leading the updating of the website will further increase the website's utility and impact.
- Having quality video footage and uploading this footage onto the site, (through You Tube) is key to generating interest in the unfolding stories and events through the website.

- Creating a High Resolution Image Gallery for the Press to quickly and efficiently download images to accompany news stories would contribute to more stories and more dominant coverage.

Social Media:

These were the first Olympic Games where social media significantly impacted how the Games were viewed and reported on. At the various venues and events thousands of users were reporting live on what they were seeing, hearing, and experiencing through real time feeds on their mobile devices. It was a very exciting time indeed! The PRIDE house page on Facebook had 898 followers, with an additional 430 following through Twitter, with links to both pages posted on the website.

Looking back, however, there were a number of missed social media opportunities. The Whistler PRIDE house, where much of the social media messaging was generated, often had a weak internet connection causing uploads to time out. Not having a separate office in Whistler also meant interruptions to the timely loading of social media content. Having Heather Kitching, from SIRIUS XM's OutQ News Blog, as a dedicated reporter and blogger provided some excellent coverage (print and video) of PRIDE house events which was posted on the PRIDE house website as well as Heather's SIRIUS blog¹¹. In addition, the contribution by the journalism student, Andre, based out of QMUNITY, on the social media content was very helpful.

Looking ahead, future PRIDE house pavilions would benefit from having a couple of dedicated social media experts who can load content in real time and focus solely on this one important aspect.

¹¹ See <http://outqnews.wordpress.com/2010/02/> for archived articles.

Olympic Press Conference:

Another first was the PRIDE house press conference held at the Whistler Media House¹² in Whistler on February 24, 2010. Organized by Dean Nelson and Ken Coolen, the press conference provided access to a world class venue where PRIDE house could further the importance of having a dedicated space for LGBT persons, families, friends and allies, and highlight the work that still to be done to address homophobia worldwide, especially in the world of sport.



PRIDE house News Conference Panelists at Whistler Olympic Press Venue. From left to right are Dean Nelson – Founder and Co-Producer of PRIDE House, Ken Coolen - Co-Producer of PRIDE House and President of Vancouver Pride Society, Caryl Dolinko- Interpride, Jennifer Birch-Jones – CAAWS, Moira Lassen – Athletes CAN, and Mark Tewksbury – PRIDE house spokesperson and sport commentator. Photo courtesy of Heather Kitching. Accessed at <http://outqnews.wordpress.com/2010/02/25/olympic-pride-house-staff-stand-up-for-johnny-weir-at-press-conference/>

Working with Tourism Whistler and the Whistler Media House on a Press Conference strategy as early as October 2009 ensured that a date and time was reserved, well in advance, to allow PRIDE house an opportunity to address the international media. By being proactive, PRIDE house messaging was kept front and centre as the Whistler Media House planned various press conferences and media opportunities.

¹² Whistler Media House - the official Non Accredited Olympic Media Centre ran by Tourism Whistler in association with the Canadian Tourism Commission, Tourism British Columbia and the Resort Municipality of Whistler.

Having tight communication lines with the Whistler Media House also allowed PRIDE house to secure ideal news slots and maximize opportunities to promote the PRIDE house mission when the story broke about the homophobic remarks made by RDS French Canadian Sports commentators. As a result of this incident, PRIDE house had the perfect opportunity to address the world media on an issue that was meaningful to the Olympics while addressing the homophobic remarks and validating the need for PRIDE house. The International PRIDE house Press Conference at the Whistler Media House was broadcast live on February 24, 2010 on the official Olympic Broadcast Services and subsequently reported by more than 72 local and global news outlets.¹³

Sponsors and Partnerships

PRIDE house was only made possible through the generous support of our corporate and community sponsors that believed in the concept and were willing to stand up publicly on a world stage to show their unwavering support of human rights, specifically LGBT diversity.

The Pan Pacific Whistler Village Centre took an enormous risk in having their brand front and centre of a Pavilion that had the potential to be controversial. For the most part the hotel only had a few guests refuse to stay at their property because of “a gay association that was not within the guest’s personal family values.” Jim Douglas, General Manager of Pan Pacific Whistler stressed the fact that the Pan Pacific welcomes everyone:

“We are proud to be chosen as the host venue for this historical PRIDE House. We have always welcomed everyone to our properties with open arms and our team has always enjoyed the week of Winter PRIDE, so this was a natural and easy decision for us to embrace.”¹⁴

Every partnership was valuable; from the beverage sponsors that kept the pavilions and special events exciting, to the community sponsors that shared the PRIDE house quest with



¹³ For more details, see <http://outgnews.wordpress.com/2010/02/25/olympic-pride-house-staff-stand-up-for-johnny-weir-at-press-conference/#more-818>

¹⁴ May 8, 2009 Pan Pacific Press Release. Accessed at <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs073/1101795615828/archive/1102567969371.html>.

their membership, and the media sponsors that helped to get the PRIDE house story front and centre, especially in the early days.

Strategic partnerships were also critical to the success of the pavilions since they made the PRIDE house content rich, balanced and diverse.

The Legacy Lives On

When interviewed at the Closing Ceremony for the PRIDE house pavilion, founder and Executive Producer, Dean Nelson felt that the PRIDE house was indeed a success:

“Well you know, our number one goal was to get people talking about it, and I think we achieved that goal,” said Nelson. “The amount of press we were able to engage [to] get people thinking about fixing the system, that was really big for us. We’re moving in the right direction in that we’re making it much safer and more inclusive for all our athletes. It would’ve been nice if we’d had more athletes and maybe even more spectators come through and share that, but that was a secondary goal.”¹⁵

Indeed, the awareness raised and the conversations started around the 2010 PRIDE house are having an impact, some directly related to the 2010 PRIDE house, others certainly linked to it. Some of the more significant ripples follow.

Although only a few LGBT Olympians and Paralympians were able to visit one of the PRIDE house pavilions, having a physical and visible presence at these major Games remains very important, especially to the many LGBT team members not publicly out. Blake Skjellerup, a New Zealand speed skater who was not publicly out when competing at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, was able to visit the PRIDE house pavilion in Whistler. After he competed, Blake came forward to say:

“I was a bit shocked that I was the first competing gay athlete from these Olympics to visit, especially since I wasn’t able to make it there (owing to scheduling conflicts) until after I had finished competing. But it was great to see such a thing. If I had felt like I needed a space to be myself away from the Olympic village, it would have been there. I hope the idea can grow from Olympics to Olympics.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Heather Kitching. *Olympic PRIDE house: The final hours*. Accessed at <http://outqnews.wordpress.com/2010/03/01/olympic-pride-house-the-final-hours/>

¹⁶ Jim Buzinski (May 28, 2010). *New Zealand Olympian Comes Out*. Accessed at <http://outsports.com/jocktalkblog/2010/05/05/new-zealand-olympian-comes-out/>

Indeed, Blake credits the Vancouver Olympics with inspiring him to come out of the closet:

*"Skjellerup visited Whistler's PRIDE house during the Games and found the welcoming atmosphere there for gay athletes gave him the courage to go public. 'I looked at my boyfriend and said, if they can do it, why can't we?' he told Vancouver's Xtra newspaper. Skjellerup, 24, said he didn't come out earlier for fear of losing sponsors and his place on the team. 'As time goes on and more people come out, the younger athletes will have an easier time accepting their sexuality,' he said."*¹⁷



Dean Nelson, Blake Skjellerup and Ken Coolen at Whistler PRIDE house. Photo courtesy of Dean Nelson.

Similarly, the early conversations with AthletesCAN in the Fall Of 2009 and their historic participation in the Olympic PRIDE house press conference led to a follow-up conversation with the Executive Director of Coaches Canada about the need to raise awareness among the national team coaches here in Canada. This discussion then led to commitment by AthletesCAN, Coaches of Canada, and CAAWS to work collaboratively to address homophobia in sport. Indeed, one of their first items was to call the national sport community to action in addressing homophobia as part of this year's International Day Against Homophobia on May 17th.¹⁸

The conversations started within the COC on addressing homophobia in sport will certainly continue with their historic selection of Mark Tewksbury, one of the few publicly out Olympians, as the 2012 Chef de Mission for Canada's Summer Olympic Team. In his own words, Mark's homosexuality is and isn't an issue:

*"The interesting thing is that did come up today during interviews. The fact that it isn't an issue is kind of an issue. In 2010, being openly gay is not really a story," he said. "The fact that I'm openly gay is a testament to the fact that I'm a person who lives a life of values and integrity. That sets an example as a leader."*¹⁹

¹⁷ Macleans (May 28, 2010). *Newsmakers - A new Olympic legacy*. Accessed at <http://www2.macleans.ca/2010/05/28/newsmakers-27/>

¹⁸ For more details on the Call to Action, see <http://www.coachesofcanada.com/item.asp?id=335>

¹⁹ Jen Gerson (August 6, 2010). *Mark Tewksbury looks forward to role as Summer Olympics chef de mission - Calgary icon to lead Canada at London Games*. Accessed at: <http://www.calgaryherald.com/sports/Tewksbury+named+chef+mission/3365767/story.html>

There are also other conversations stemming from PRIDE house from the voices of allies. Ann Holmes, a Board member of B.C.'s ProMOTION Plus, was inspired by Mark Tewksbury at PRIDE house's CAAWS Film Night to continue having the difficult conversations on homophobia in sport with her first year sociology in sport college students²⁰. Conversations at CAAWS about making their Women's 55-70 program more inclusive for LBT women are also taking place. Additionally, the Stanley Cup made its first ever appearance in a gay pride parade. The decision by the Chicago Blackhawks to be the first NHL team to have the Stanley Cup involved in a Pride parade may also have been partially motivated by their desire to alleviate concerns about the homophobic slur against Chris Pronger inadvertently captured by a sport photographer on the team's white board in the dressing room during the Stanley Cup celebrations.²¹. Finally, the legacy of Brendan Burke lives on after his tragic death in a car accident in January of 2010, just three months after coming out to his friends and fellow Miami University hockey team members²² as his family, most notably his father Brian, and others in the National Hockey League honour his memory.

These conversations and actions will ensure that future Major Games have their own PRIDE house. Members of the PRIDE house Steering Committee have been in touch with the Organizing Committees for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, England and the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. Indeed, the London Organizing Committee (LOCOG) has been the first Olympic and Paralympic Organizing Committee to have an official "gay pride" pin to reach out to the gay community and demonstrate their support for diversity. In presenting the first ever Olympic gay pride pin to Gareth Thomas, the Welsh rugby player who is the world's only current professional athlete in a team sport that is openly gay, Stephen Frost, LOCOG's Director of Diversity and Inclusion indicated that ending homophobia in sport was one of the aims of London staging the Olympics.²³

Closer to home in Canada, conversations are underway between Egale Canada, a partner with the 2010 PRIDE house, and the Ontario government to have a PRIDE house created for the 2015 PanAmerican Games being held in the Toronto and Golden Horseshoe region between July 10 and July 26, 2015. The PRIDE house proposal currently under consideration seeks to establish PRIDE house as the first ever venue to be included in the Pan American Games providing a meeting place for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) athletes, coaches, family, friends and allies which after the Games, will be transformed into an LGBT Human Rights Centre bridging issues of social inclusion, youth development and LGBT equality as a hosting legacy.

²⁰ For more details, see http://www.caaws.ca/homophobia/e/in_the_news/AnnHolmes_OlympicMemories.pdf

²¹ For more details, see <http://www.feastoffun.com/topics/politics-activism/2010/06/15/blackhawks-caught-flaunting-their-homophobia/>

²² Joe Yerdon (June 27, 2010). *Brent Sopel takes Stanley Cup to Chicago's Pride Parade*. Accessed at <http://prohockeytalk.nbcsports.com/2010/06/brent-sopel-takes-stanley-cup-to-chicagos-pride-parade.php>

²³ For more details, see <http://www.insidethegames.biz/summer-olympics/london-2012-news/9947-london-2012-launch-pin-badge-for-gay-community>

Final Thoughts

So, was the PRIDE house a success? Members of the 2010 PRIDE house Steering Committee certainly think so. And they are not alone. Canada's largest pride celebration, PRIDE Toronto, selected PRIDE house as a winner of one their prestigious awards, presented each year in a number of categories to individuals and organizations whose work and dedication have made a positive impact on the LGBTTIQQ2SA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, Two-Spirited & Allied) community. PRIDE house was a winner in the sports category:

"If there were an Olympic category for queer awareness, PRIDE house would take home the gold. PRIDE house, a pavilion at the 2010 Whistler [and Vancouver] Olympic and Paralympics Games, provided a venue for LGBT athletes, the community and allies to celebrate diversity through sport. The initiative provided LGBT athletes the opportunity to expose the hidden homophobia that characterizes the sports world and the issues that would otherwise remain invisible - and unacknowledged."²⁴

Although there is still much work to do to address homophobia in the world around us, particularly in the world of sport, all of us who were able to contribute in some small way to the success of the historic first ever PRIDE house hope that the conversations started in Whistler and Vancouver will continue to be a catalyst for positive change in the LGBT community in the months and years ahead.

²⁴ PRIDE Toronto (June 2010). *Pride Toronto Announces 2010 Award Winners*. Retrieved from <http://www.pridetoronto.com/press/pride-toronto-announces-2010-award-winners/>

ANNEX A - 2010 VANCOUVER PRIDE HOUSE STEERING COMMITTEE

- 1) Jennifer Birch-Jones

Education and Outreach Lead

Program Lead, Addressing Homophobia in Sport Initiative

Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS)

- 2) Jennifer Breakspear

Steering Committee Chair

PRIDE house Lead – Vancouver

Media and Web Committees

Executive Director, QMUNITY

- 3) Sharalyn Jordan

LEGIT/Rainbow Refugee

- 4) Helen Kennedy

Executive Director EGALE, ILGA Board Member

- 5) Marion Lay

Media Spokesperson

Member-at-large

- 6) Karin Lofstrom

Executive Director, Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS)

- 7) AJ Murray / Bev Siver

Media and Web Committees

Communications Coordinator/ ED, ProMOTION Plus – Girls and Women in Sport and Physical Activity

- 8) Dean Nelson

PRIDE house, Executive Producer and Lead - Whistler

Media and Web Committees

CEO, Community & Media Relations, Alpenglw Productions Corp.

- 9) Sandy Silver

Member-at-Large

- 10) Diane St-Denis

COC/VANOC, 2011 Outgames

Member-at-Large