

2024

ANNUAL

REPORT

Pride is here.

Prepared by

St. John's Pride Board of Directors

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Land Acknowledgement

01

We respectfully acknowledge the land on which we gather as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, whose culture has now been erased forever. We also acknowledge the island of Ktaqmkuk (Newfoundland) as the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq. And we acknowledge Labrador as the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Innu of Nitassinan, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, and the Inuit of NunatuKavut.

We recognize all First Peoples who were here before us, those who live with us now, and the seven generations to come. As First Peoples have done since time immemorial, we strive to be responsible stewards of the land and to respect the cultures, ceremonies, and traditions of all who call it home. As we open our hearts and minds to the past, we commit ourselves to working in a spirit of truth and reconciliation to make a better future for all.

Safer Spaces Statement

St. John's Pride is dedicated to providing a space that is accessible, inclusive, and free from oppression, harassment, and discrimination.

In this space, we will treat each other with respect and dignity, regardless of age, race, faith and belief, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, levels of ability, and all our other diverse identities.

Everyone entering this space has a responsibility to uphold these values.



Message from the Chairs



In 2023, many members felt disconnected from St. John's Pride. Only three people joined the board and worked with community partners to deliver a festival in seven weeks. This year, seven board members worked hard to be more engaged with community and we are proud to share some of the highlights and reflect on the efforts of the board, our partners, and our membership.

Advocacy is vital to any Pride organization. This year, we conducted a community survey with Narrative Research to better understand the needs within our community and ensure we are amplifying marginalized voices. We are especially grateful for our partnership with Palestine Action YYT, whose allyship and guidance has been invaluable. St. John's Pride was one of the first Pride organizations to publicly stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people, advocating for their right to exist and live free from oppression. Our stance inspired other Pride organizations to follow suit, and we were proud to hold a parade that was not disrupted, unlike many others. In Toronto, St. John's Pride was highlighted because of our efforts to work with members to create a festival and an organization that is more reflective of their concerns.

Of course, this year wasn't without its challenges. Our solidarity statements against genocide were met with backlash from for-profit companies who sought to undermine our work. This experience showed us that for some organizations, their support for Pride is conditional—focused more on brand visibility than genuine allyship. Yet, we've seen time and again that the community will always come together. Pride is not about what organizations do for us; it's about what we do for ourselves.

We are immeasurably grateful to the community members who reached out to us – as individuals and as an organization – to commit their time, money, solidarity, and support to the festival, community, and the shared struggle for liberation. Despite challenges over many years, this community remains committed to a Pride Festival and to creating space for each other.

Looking ahead, we're excited to continue making space for our community. Work is already underway to make our organization more accessible. We are also being actively invited to participate in events and discussions, further extending our reach and impact.

Our current board has capacity to support more year-round events and intends to create powerful and fun events for our community into 2025. More partners continue to reach out to partner on cool, exciting, important initiatives.

While we appreciate the work of all our members and partners, we also recognize our current board of directors is not representative of our community and our future as an organization. We are committed to addressing barriers that discourage participation from Indigenous and racialized members at the board level. We intend to continue building and rebuilding trust with those members, and attract more so our organization reflects the diverse makeup of our community.

As always, none of this year's achievements would be possible without the passion and hard work of our community. Together, we are building something powerful and lasting. Pride is here because of all of us.

Thank you for your continued support.

In solidarity,

The Co-Chairs



St. John's Pride Overview

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Mission

St. John's Pride's provides advocacy through education, visibility, events, and resources.

We organize and oversee an annual Festival and year-round events to celebrate and highlight the rich diversity within our communities and around St. John's.

Board Directors

- Scott Lester, Co-chair Internal
- Eddy St. Coeur, Co-chair External
- Danielle Babstock, Co-chair Finance
- David Maher, Programming and Events
- Jenna Slaney, Accessibility and Inclusion
- Ellen Davis, Communications
- Michael Davis, Parade and Volunteers

Board Reports: Volunteers



The St. John's board of directors recognize and thank all of our volunteers in 2024. Your support and hard work were essential to the smooth execution of this year's events.

Volunteers play a crucial role in making our festival a success. From assisting with event logistics to engaging with attendees, your contributions were key to ensuring everything ran efficiently. We appreciate the time and effort you dedicated to the various tasks and responsibilities.

Your involvement helped create an enjoyable experience for everyone who attended, and we are grateful for your commitment. Thank you for your valuable support throughout the year.

54

festival volunteers



27

volunteers attended events



310

festival volunteer hours



2,800

volunteer planning hours



Board Report: Accessibility

In 2024, several new initiatives have been introduced to enhance inclusivity and community engagement. A key development is the partnership with Triangular Communications to provide ASL interpretation, ensuring better accessibility for all attendees. Additionally, sensory-friendly spaces were created to accommodate individuals with different sensory needs. Virtual events, including the annual general meeting and election, will be held to facilitate participation.

To ensure the community felt like an active contributor in the creation of festival events, a community event registration form and a performer application form were introduced. To promote inclusivity and unbiased casting, a Performer Selection Committee oversaw the selection process. Community members were encouraged to refrain from wearing law enforcement uniforms or insignia at events to foster a welcoming atmosphere and we thank them for respecting that request.



Large signage was implemented to display maps, event destinations, mission statements, and land acknowledgments, enhancing overall navigation and understanding of our collective goals.

2025 GOALS

- Incorporate a secondary committee with folks who have lived experience to be able to voice opinions and offer suggestions directly through a board member.
- More events targeted towards queer youth, queer elders, and dry/sober events.
- Provide complimentary ticket options for support/respite workers attending ticketed events with community members.

View a complete list of accessibility features for each festival event in Appendix A: Accessibility Features.

Board Report: Community Engagement and Communications

The past year has been a transformative one for our festival, marked by our commitment to engaging with the community and refining our messaging to better align with their needs and expectations. This report outlines our key communications and marketing strategies for 2024, highlighting our community-driven approach, the development and impact of our theme, and the importance of early and consistent communication in driving festival awareness. Building on our successes and lessons learned this year, we head into a 2025 filled with opportunity for growth and connection.

Community Survey

We began our 2024 planning by conducting an extensive survey designed to capture the voice of our community. This survey helped critical themes and concerns that would shape our festival's direction and messaging for 2024. The results of the survey, available on our website, helped our new board understand our community's priorities.

Key Survey Findings:

- *Desire for Communication:* Respondents want more frequent updates and engagement from St. John's Pride.
- *Accessibility and Inclusivity:* Demand for family-friendly, all-ages, accessible events that support BIPOC and trans communities.

- *Priority Issues:* Mental health services and discrimination against the trans community, education and support for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth are top concerns.
- *Police Presence:* Strong support for police to march in the parade not in uniform. Support for police presence emphasizes inclusion. Opposition addresses concerns about law enforcement's historical context and ongoing discrimination.

Pride is Here

In response to the themes identified in our community survey, we developed a unifying theme for this year's festival: "Pride is Here." A theme throughout our marketing materials helps unite and promote the festival and its events. We built a theme that we felt represents our unique community, and the past, present, and future of pride in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Transparency and Engagement

Effective communication was crucial in building awareness and promoting the festival throughout the year. It also proved crucial during communications challenges and emerging communication issues. Our strategy focused on early announcements and maintaining a steady flow of information to engage our audience and generate excitement.

We prioritized clarity, transparency, authenticity, and collaboration. Our community donated their time and efforts to provide insight, guidance, and support to help us build messages and strategies for our festival.

Impact and Next Steps

In 2024, we worked to develop trusted partnerships. These will guide significant initiatives in 2025, including the bylaw review and board sustainability planning. Community collaborations foster transparency and ensure community voices are centered in decision-making.

To improve accessibility, we enhanced information availability across channels and are committed to developing a new website as a centralized hub for community resources. This initiative will ensure that all members can easily access relevant information and engage with our festival.

2024 promotional efforts strengthened our reach, laying a solid foundation for next year's funding and sponsorship planning. We increased awareness of St. John's Pride both locally and nationally, positioning St. John's and Newfoundland as a premier festival destination. We will continue to expand promotional efforts to celebrate our community and provide valuable opportunities for artists, performers, and event organizers.



Sponsorship Report



A heartfelt thank you to the 2024 sponsors!

This year, St. John's Pride saw a mix of returning and new sponsors who shared our commitment to celebrating 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and standing in solidarity with marginalized groups worldwide. Moving forward, we aim to collaborate with sponsors who not only champion Pride, but also recognize that the fight for the liberation of all people is deeply interconnected.

Much conversation happened this year about sponsors and Pride sponsorship. Before the 2024 Festival, we held conversations with our sponsors about our decisions to invite Palestine Action YYT to be the parade grand marshal and to adopt the conditions of engagement document.



St. John's Pride returned some sponsorship funds in line with the commitments to the conditions of engagement. Some sponsors withdrew their support, while others offered to remain as named sponsors. Some requested the cancellation of their sponsorship invoices.

For transparency with our community, here is a summary of sponsorship activity prior to the 2024 Festival:

- Invoices refunded post June 29: **\$10,000**
- Invoices cancelled post June 29 : **\$8,300**

We are grateful to our community for an extraordinary effort to rally donations in the wake of withdrawn sponsorships.

\$52,500



Sponsorships funds raised

Financial Highlights

St. John's Pride Inc. is a not-for-profit entity. The board of directors is tasked to be financially responsible and reinvest funds raised for the festival into programming, events, resources, and the community. In 2024, funds were raised from a variety of sources including government contributions, sponsorship, and community donations.



Revenue	\$144,022 ↗
Expenses	\$114,572 ↘
Opening Cash Balance	\$34,845 ↗
Closing Cash Balance	\$64,295 ↗

Revenue

Opening Cash Flow Balance	\$34,845
Revenue	
Sponsorship	\$52,500
Rainbow Sponsorship	\$7,500
Silver Sponsorship	\$12,000
Gold Sponsorship	\$33,000
Platinum Sponsorship	\$0
Government Funding	\$52,900
Municipal	\$3,500
Provincial	\$15,000
Federal	\$34,400
Event Revenue	\$25,491
Pride After Dark	\$17,703
Parade	\$7,788
Donations	\$12,119
Bank Rebates	\$75
Merchandise Sales	\$938
Total Revenue	\$144,022

Expenses

Expenses	
Accessibility costs	\$5,063
Bank fees	\$550
Board meetings	\$1,756
Conferences	\$2,384
Decorations	\$2,180
Donations	\$300
Election costs	\$156
Equipment rental	\$11,911
Food & beverages	\$3,143
Honorariums	\$275
Insurance	\$6,950
Membership fees	\$100
Office supplies	\$350
Other	\$250
Performers & prizes - Local	\$22,264

Expenses

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Refunded parade registration & sponsorships	\$10,400
Security	\$15,758
Sponsorships	\$1,000
Subscription fees	\$131
Transportation	\$155
Venue rental	\$7,337
Total Expenses	\$114,572
Closing Cash Flow Balance	\$64,295



Challenges and Lessons Learned

Board Stabilization

A small board remained in operation after the 2023 festival. To create a larger, experienced team, two elections (in-person and online) were held, resulting in a stable board of seven members by the end of the term.

Organizational Transition

The transition between boards revealed a fairly disorganized Google Drive and limited access to important accounts. Significant time was dedicated to restructuring files and creating a system that was more efficient for current and future board members.

Community Engagement

The board learned that community support can be more reliable than corporate sponsorship, as community members stepped up with donations when needed. This helped reduce St. John's Pride reliance on sponsorship to execute the festival.

Volunteer Expectations

The absence of paid administrative support and increasing pressure on volunteers pose risks to the organization and festival. This year's board operated without stable funding for paid positions, highlighting the need to secure funding for ongoing community support.

Workload Management

The board worked to prevent members from becoming overwhelmed by their duties. It was crucial to balance allowing board members space to manage personal challenges while ensuring accountability for their responsibilities.

Financial Constraints

The board operated with limited financial resources. Meeting deadlines for grant applications due in October was challenging. Having the AGM in the fall puts a lot of pressure on the incoming board to meet these deadlines while they were being onboarded.

Education

Broader education on the true meaning of Pride is needed, as perceptions often reduce it to just the parade, rather than acknowledging its roots in protest, protection, and celebration. The board should represent this in the community.

Community Action

The community's ability to mobilize quickly on issues (i.e., supporting the local Palestinian movement) highlighted the importance of grassroots engagement over corporate responsiveness.

Visioning 2025



St. John's Pride will continue to build on the community engagement generated this past year. Two years ago, interest in Pride as an organization saw nobody come forward for Board positions. After last year's festival, a full board of Directors was elected at a special AGM. Both in 2023 and 2024, overall participation in the Festival grew. More people are interested in what the organization is doing -- and that engagement needs to continue if the organization is to be stable long-term.

The vision for the St. John's Pride Board in 2025 includes several important initiatives. One key priority will be updating the organization's bylaws. This process will involve consultations with Indigenous and QTBIPOC communities to ensure their voices are heard and centered. The board will also focus on honouring the commitments made during the 2024 festival and embedding them into the bylaws in a way that has the full support of the membership.

Another area of focus will be improving the accessibility and user-friendliness of the website. In partnership with Bluedrop ISM and a web designer, the board aims to create a site that better serves future boards and the broader community. To create an organization that is better shielded from changes in government priorities, and corporate interests, the Board will explore the creation of a legacy fund aimed at addressing community needs.

In 2025, the board plans to embrace the spirit of the Canada Games and hopes to amplify voices and support efforts in this space.

Together, let's cultivate a Pride festival in 2025 that celebrates our rich heritage, fosters inclusivity, and inspires generations to come. The future is bright, and united, we can achieve remarkable things!

Appendix A: Accessibility Features

City Flag Raising

- ASL Interpretation via Triangular Communication
- Live stream option

Beers for Queers

- ASL Interpretation via Triangular Communication
- Physically accessible venue

Pride Panel 1

- Gender neutral washrooms
- Physically accessible venue (large main entrance off of the sidewalk, a lift elevator to bathroom access)
- Earplugs available

Pride After Dark

- Non-alcoholic specialty drink options
- Earplugs available
- Accessible stage viewing area
- “Brave Space” - a sensory friendly area that provided folks with a private space outside of the main ballroom that offered reduced noise, harm reduction materials/naloxone, fidget toys, and a mental health first aider present throughout the event.
- Private dressing room space for performers to change and store belongings, with volunteers and board members present to ensure safety and security.
- Multiple seating areas/rest stops
- Gender neutral bathrooms
- Venue to accommodate physical accessibility (ramps to the main entrance, large doorways/hallways, accessible washroom close to the event space)
- Ticket pricing options (affordable prices, ally options to sponsor a ticket)
- Security present throughout the event

Appendix A: Accessibility Features

Drag on Water

- ASL Interpretation via Triangular Communication
- Private dressing room space for performers to change and store belongings, with volunteers and board members present to ensure safety and security.

Pride Panel 2

- Physically accessible venue (large main entrance off of the sidewalk, a lift elevator to bathroom access)
- ASL Interpretation via Triangular Communication

Drag on George

- ASL Interpretation via Triangular Communication
- Private dressing room space for performers to change and store belongings, with volunteers and board members present to ensure safety and security.

Pride Parade

- Accessible bus with volunteer support (Burse's bussing)
- Accessible viewing areas with volunteer support (sensory friendly zone and physically accessible zone)
- Free water

Pride in the Park

- ASL Interpretation via Triangular Communication
- Physically accessible venue (Bannerman Park - paved trails, multiple entry points)
- Free water
- Private dressing room space for performers to change and store belongings, with volunteers and board members present to ensure safety and security.

Contact Us



St. John's Pride

info@stjpride.ca

Email



www.stjpride.ca

Website



St. John's Pride Inc
PO Box 6141
St. John's Stn C, NL
A1C 5M5

