



PRESS RELEASE

Trans Lives Matter: The Ten Oaks Project Supports Human Rights and Bill C-279

OTTAWA – February 25, 2015 – The Ten Oaks Project throws its support behind the Gender Identity Bill (also known as Bill C-279) as it is currently drafted; this Bill will be decided upon by a Senate committee today, February 25, 2015.

Although expectations are low regarding the Bill's chances of success to pass Senate as it is currently drafted, the Ten Oaks Project would like to take the opportunity to give voice to the many children and youth it works with that identify as trans or have a parent or family member who identifies this way.

For more than a decade, the Ten Oaks Project has honoured and respected participants' affirmed gender identities. As such, children and youth that have attended either of its two inclusive summer camps have blossomed in the organization's safe spaces. The camps focus on building capacity for children and youth from LGBTQ+ communities that fosters self-esteem, leadership skills and community connections.

The magic of camp is a short respite from the real world, where trans children and youth are the country's most vulnerable and at-risk citizens for hate crime, discrimination and suicide. Ten Oaks is unequivocally in the struggle with the trans community on this issue, and hopes that the Senate committee will **do the right thing – the human thing**, by passing Bill C-279.

Three-time Ten Oaks camper, [Rose](#), knew she wanted to be a girl before she could talk. For much of her early childhood, she was unhappy. When Rose was nine years old, she attended Camp Ten Oaks. It was here, and with the loving support of her family, that she gained the last bit of courage to transition to the person she knew she was meant to be. Ten Oaks implores the Senate committee to acknowledge and protect children like Rose by requesting it amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and Criminal Code to show that trans lives in Canada matter.

Fast Facts:

- The Ten Oaks Project joins a Coalition of organizations in support of Bill C-279, including **Amnesty International, Egale Canada, Gender Mosaic** and the **Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs**.
- **The Ten Oaks Project** is a registered charity and volunteer-driven organization that empowers children and youth from LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, queer) communities through its two outdoor education camping programs, **Camp Ten Oaks** and **Project Acorn**, both held at RKY Camp near Kingston, Ontario.

- The first and only summer camp of its kind in Canada, **Camp Ten Oaks** is an accredited member of the Ontario Camping Association and will take place from July 26-August 1, 2015, at **RKY Camp** near Kingston, Ontario.
- **Project Acorn** is a four-day program (August 30–September 2, 2015) for youth aged 16 to 24 that offers an empowering and liberating experience with workshops, speakers, camp activities and magic. Supported by **United Way Ottawa** and the **Inspirit Foundation**, it was spearheaded by the Ten Oaks Project's first ever Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) in 2008.

Quotes:

"In 2015, Human Rights should never be a matter for governments to grant its citizens. This is a pivotal time in Canada's history and a chance for our government to finally do the right thing – the human thing – and be on the right side of history for the trans community in this country. It's an opportunity to show that trans lives matter and that they are valued and important citizens deserving of equal human rights, like everyone else in Canada. Let us show the world that ignorance and fear have no place in Canadian government, and prevent further unlawful suffering in silence of trans children, youth and adults." - **Dawn Moore, Board President, Ten Oaks Project**

About Ten Oaks Project

Based in Ottawa, the Ten Oaks Project has been meeting the needs of children and youth from LGBTQ+ identities, families and communities since 2004. With innovative and cutting-edge programming modeled on the principles of social justice, campers learn through play, workshops and social interaction to enhance self-esteem, life skills, independence, leadership and self-confidence. The Ten Oaks Project strives to ensure programs remain economically accessible and are safe spaces where children and youth of LGBTQ+ communities can thrive.

For More Information:

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