

Nominee

Name of Youth, Group or Organization you are nominating:

M.I. understanding

Address of Nominee (please include City, as well as postal code)

244 Briscoe St E London ON N6C 1X6

Name(s) of Contact People (including position titles)

Paula Jesty, Principal/Owner

➤ **Small business/small labour (49 or fewer employees/members)**

Does the nominee meet the eligibility criteria? yes

Project

What is the initiative this group/organization implemented?

www.Prideunderstanding.ca

When did the initiative take place? eg. Spring 2018

Pride understanding was launched January, 18, 2018 and is ongoing.

Do you know who the key department(s) or committees involved were? Please name:

Pride London Festival, Thames Valley District School Board, Kid's Mental Health Optimist Club of Canada, Fanshawe College, PFLAG Canada & London Chapter, The 519 Community Centre Toronto, Rainbow Optimist Club – Southwestern Ontario.

Brief description of initiative:

Pride understanding is a communication tool designed to start a conversation to increase GENDER DIVERSITY LITERACY. A series of videos & stories were created that help create a safe environment to ask questions, start a discussion to increase empathy, understanding and decrease stigma.

How has the initiative contributed to the promotion of diversity, race relations, inclusivity and human rights in London and promoting London as a welcoming city? eg. Number of people who benefited from this initiative, success stories, etc.

Over 20,000 people have been reached and impacted. This has been done through presentation and YouTube views of the videos. Presentations have been made to School Board superintendents, principals, teachers, community organizations, politicians, community organizations and the general public. Pride understanding had a booth at Pride London Festival's Pride in the Park July 27, 28 and 29 and also had a presence in the Pride Parade. Pride Understanding had a display at Forest City Comicon and was very well received

What short or long-term impact has/will the initiative have on the promotion of diversity, race relations, inclusivity and human rights in London and promoting London as a welcoming city?

One of the results was the development of material for curricula in the area of gender diversity, equity and inclusion with the focus on early intervention, understanding and the decrease of stigma; through the art of storytelling as a method of communicating, educating and increasing awareness. This initiative supported early learning around multiculturalism, human rights, diversity and the fundamental values that keep marginal communities from being isolated, leading to rejection and bullying. Other initiatives developed through this project included: the community exhibits to strengthen engagement with students, families and the community, supportive curriculum to successfully enhance existing school and community programs and to support the development of new programs centered around equity and inclusion.

What is the potential for expansion and/or inspiration for replication of the initiative?

An Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant has been applied for to create another series of video stories and expand to other school boards and areas across Ontario. Organizations in Toronto, Windsor and Sarnia already have reached out to start working with the Pride understanding team. The Rainbow Optimist Club – Southwestern Ontario will be promoting and using Pride understanding to increase understanding and gender diversity literacy in the rural LGBTQ2Q+ youth, their families and their communities.

How can receiving this Award be used to further promote diversity, race relations, inclusivity and human rights in London and to further promote London as a welcoming city?

By receiving this Award, London would be leading by example. It would be seen as a more open, understanding and welcoming City. By starting the conversations that Pride understanding can facilitate residents have a better understanding. London will be getting closer to the goal of being seen as a Creative City.

Nominator

Martin Withenshaw