



Changing the date for Youth Awards 2017
Lessons learned and the power of community

LGBT Youth Line is the proud host of the annual Youth Awards, a first of its kind gala that celebrates outstanding achievements of LGBTQ2S youth across Ontario. Based on important feedback from our community, we are moving the event to November 4th.

As a small but mighty non-profit, Youth Line provides confidential and judgment-free peer support to LGBTQ2S youth by phone, chat and text, as well as hosting events such as the Youth Awards, all with the aim of empowering and affirming the experiences of young people in our communities.

Our Board of Directors is majority youth, so is our staff and all of our volunteers. We're proud to carry this responsibility for centring the needs of young people in our communities for well over 20 years. Part of this responsibility is recognizing when we miss something important and acknowledging what we can do to address that.

In our process of organizing this year's Youth Awards, we settled on September 30th as the original date for the event. We thought we had done an appropriate check for date conflicts and began publicizing the event. This is when we heard back from a few community members and learned that we had, in fact, overlooked checking our shortlisted dates against religious calendars. As a result, the Youth Awards were booked on the same day as Yom Kippur.

Given the pressures of securing an accessible and affordable venue in Toronto, we briefly considered moving forward with the event. However, we quickly realized that we cannot create situations where LGBTQ2S youth (and their supporters) have to choose between their intersecting identities.

Therefore, we have made the decision to move the event date to November 4th.

As an organization, we have learned from this process. We are committed to ensuring that our events are accessible and inclusive. We will strive to make sure we better engage with our communities to live up to this commitment, including accounting for religious observances.

We are deeply apologetic for our original oversight and thankful to the community members whose thoughtful intervention has enabled us to correct this mistake.

We always value hearing back from our communities and are only a phone call or email away.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Berkha Gupta".

Berkha Gupta
Executive Director
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