

Pride Proud

Tim had expressed a desire to see the Pride Parade in Toronto this year, making it one of his goals. Tim and I searched the internet to find out the date, time and exact location of the parade. The question that needed to be answered - why was this parade so important to him? Tim replied, "Because this is who I am". He also expressed how important it was from him to bring back some souvenirs to remember this day. Tim acknowledged to staff that he feels comfortable in this environment, feeling like he can express and be himself. However, Tim stated that he is not comfortable amongst so many people. With Tim's disclosure, I mentioned to him that we could solve that problem by having another staff join him to go to the parade. Tim was ecstatic to hear this and immediately started to save money. With his excitement, he looked at maps of Toronto where the parade would take place, along with past photos of previous parades.

On July 24th Tim and a Passport staff, Angela, boarded the GO train to Union station. Tim was excited about the train ride into Toronto, knowing that he was about to arrive at the Pride Parade. Through all his excitement, he even started to educate Angela with useful information he had learned about Go trains. Once Tim and Angela arrived in Toronto, a huge smile flashed over his face, flooded with excitement as he exited the train. Tim and Angela started walking up Yonge Street where they met a couple of people also heading up to the parade. Tim struck up a conversation finding out that they were from Pickering. Tim asked if this was there first time at the parade, as it was his. It was theirs as well and they departed.



Tim went to many booths independently collecting freebies; flags, bracelets, a beach ball and sunglasses. Tim was certainly in his element and had an amazing comfort level despite the crowds. In fact, he said, and I quote 'I have never felt so comfortable in one place before. It feels like home to me and I feel like for the first time I fit in'. Tim continued to walk up the street when a man, almost nude, asked if he wanted his picture taken with him. Tim jumped at the chance and proudly smiled for the photo. A little, further up the street Tim started taking the initiative and independently asked drag queens to pose with him for photos. Tim was elated when they agreed, even asking, "Where's my wig?" as he chuckled! He absolutely admired the colourful gowns and makeup. Tim finally made his way up far enough to watch the parade and was thrilled with it all. He waved his flags proudly, finally feeling included within his community. He felt so comfortable that he took a photo with the Montreal pride representatives. On June 24th, Tim was standing proud, beaming with pride and feeling like he belonged. His memories will last a lifetime.

Submitted by Wendy Grindrod