



The Pride Centre of Edmonton Announces Changes in Executive Leadership Positions

July 24, 2019

We are thrilled to announce that the Board of Directors at the Pride Centre of Edmonton has offered the position of Executive Director to Estefania Cortes-Vargas and they have amiably accepted. In addition, we have elected a new Board of Directors to serve our pride community.

Over the last several weeks, we have put forward meaningful, proactive, and reparative steps to address the harm caused by the Centre to racialized members of the community, to listen to the voices of marginalized and racialized people, and to ensure that our new Board Members and new Executive Director embody the intersectionality that, when celebrated and nurtured, fuel the progress of our collective movement for safety and equality.

Estefania Cortes-Vargas (all pronouns) is seen as a trailblazer; they were elected in 2015, becoming one of the first openly non-binary queer MLAs, the first Colombian-Canadian MLA, and the youngest government whip in Alberta's history. Estefania is known for their impassioned community focus and their dedication to building collaborative relationships. We are confident that Estefania's unique skills will support and strengthen the important programs and sense of community that our Pride Centre strives to provide.



From the Left: Shawndy Kowalchuk, Mohamed Rahall, Estefania Cottes-Vargas, Meghan Fausto, Kayla Walton — hosting a staff meeting at The Pride Centre of Edmonton with the new Executive Director Estefania Cortes-Vargas.



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Estefania and the Board have a shared vision for our Centre: to make this space one where ideas and projects can flourish and where community members can find common ground. That ground is the protection, celebration, and growth of our 2SLGBTQ+ community – to grow in our reach and also grow in how we address emerging issues of our time. Estefania has already begun meeting with QTIBPOC and other community groups to listen to feedback so that we can inform the way Centre will move forward. Estefania recognizes that the strength of the 2SLGBTQ+ community lies in the broad range of lived experience, professionals, and expertise that make up people we serve, active community groups, and partner organizations.

Given the vast intersections of identities and experiences that our Centre represents, we know that purposeful efforts must be made in order to reflect the diversity that shapes our community. During our AGM on June 22, 2019, we implemented strategies to reduce the barriers to apply and become a board member, which resulted in successfully recruiting and electing a full board that reflects the diversity of, and passion for, our community.

Currently, there are 15 board members in total. Four of whom are continuing members and 11 are new members who will be starting their first year with the Pride Centre. Our new board chair will be elected at the July 29th meeting.

Please join us in welcoming Estefania Cortes-Vargas, as well as the new leaders on the Board of Directors.

New Board of Directors:

- Rupinder Bains
- Stephanie Booth
- Ian Brown
- Sithara Fernando
- Rose-Eva Forgues-Jenkins
- John Iocchelli
- Kera Iwanyshyn
- Kendrick Krause
- Shay Lewis
- Sean Malden
- Thais McKee
- Rhea Ross
- John Skene
- Connie Thompson
- Jamie Zarn

For more information see:

1. Letter to the Community from the Executive Director
2. At a Glance Report: The Election of the Board and Hiring Of the Executive Director

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