

Press Release - Welland (Ontario)
May 30 2023

Salem witches, immigrants, transgendered people, feminists, First Nations, religious minorities and queer people. These groups have all fallen victim to the phenomenon known as *moral panic*. This concept, coined by sociologist Stanley Cohen 51 years ago, refers to the media's amplification of the threat posed by stigmatized communities, with very little, exaggerated or erroneous information. Differences in the norms and interests of different groups are amplified, and presented as a fear-inducing danger. This fear is then exploited to create impositions and consolidate social control that undermine fundamental human rights.

June, Pride Month and National Aboriginal History Month, is upon us. It is our duty to support and strengthen the fight against all forms of discrimination, oppression and marginalization. We must not give in to *moral panic*. Let us be wary of encouraging stereotypes that exacerbate real and perceived divisions and differences between communities and individuals. Our differences deserve to be celebrated, and should not be seen as a threat to society's values. What makes us human is our ability to accept each other, and to see that our strength is indeed our diversity. We must respect the rights of all and avoid seeking *evil* in order to prove *good*.

In addition to the beginning of the summer solstice, a time of year symbolizing a new season of life and a chance to make a fresh start, June gives us the opportunity to learn more about the heritage and diversity of First Nations peoples, and to celebrate every action taken to protect the rights of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. It is by breaking down the myths surrounding xenophobia, racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism and all other forms of irrational fear of differences that we will succeed in making the world a better place.

Over the next few weeks, the CSCHN family and community members will be invited to take part in activities to raise awareness of the realities of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and First Nations peoples. To kick off the month, we will be raising the Franco-Pride flag for the 5th consecutive year in Welland, on June 1, at noon, and for the 3rd year in Hamilton, on June 2, at the same time.

To live in tolerance and for love to conquer hate, let us be brave and take the risk of communicating and accepting others.
Join us and learn more.

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