



Embracing Diversity in the GTA

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TREB PRESIDENT'S COLUMN AS IT APPEARS IN THE TORONTO SUN

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One aspect that sets the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) apart from many other world cities is the diversity of people it attracts.

According to Canada's 2006 Census, nearly 46 per cent of all GTA residents are foreign-born. That's the highest percentage in North America and even higher than any of the major cities in Australia, the world's most diverse nation.

Many people are drawn to our city because it is a place where people from around the world come together to share their strengths. Our differences though, extend well beyond ethnic origins to varied religious faiths, dietary preferences, and sexual orientations, to name just a few.

While there is always room for advancement, in contrast to other urban centres around the world ours is a city where diversity is embraced.

One example of this culture of acceptance is Toronto's Pride Parade, which has thrived in our city for 30 years. Pride celebrations in 1981 drew a crowd of approximately 1,500 participants. Today, attendance at the event surpasses 1.2 million people.

As President of the Toronto Real Estate Board (TREB), I am delighted that for the first time ever Greater Toronto REALTORS® will be participating as a group in this year's Pride Parade, which takes place July 4th.

Our association's entry, "TREB Celebrates Diversity" will consist of a float and a 200 person marching presence.

As Canada's largest real estate board, serving more than 30,000 REALTORS® in the GTA, it is particularly appropriate for TREB to pursue new frontiers of paying tribute to our city's diversity.

If you are a Greater Toronto REALTOR® please accept this as my personal invitation to join in the procession. Applicants will be accepted on a first come, first served basis.

The parade, which is expected to last approximately two hours, begins at 2pm at Bloor and Church Street, traveling east on Bloor to Yonge Street, then south on Yonge to Gerrard, turning west to return to Church Street.

Participants are asked to bring water and check in one hour in advance.

If you would like to receive an application to march behind the "TREB Celebrates Diversity" float please contact trebprideparaderegistration@trebnet.com Your registration will be confirmed via email.

I look forward to seeing you there and in the meantime, if you are interested in learning about the many ways REALTORS® make a difference in the community please visit www.TorontoRealEstateBoard.com.

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Tom Lebour is President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 28,000 REALTORS® in the Greater Toronto Area.