

York Pride Festival events kick off this Sunday at Upper Canada Mall

Pride Month is here and the York Pride Festival is gearing up for a busy month celebrating not only the local 2SLGBTQIA+ community, but an important anniversary of their own: the tenth anniversary of the York Region Pride Parade.

York Pride will formally kick-off the countdown to the big day this Sunday, June 4, at Upper Canada Mall from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. with fun for the whole family, including button-making, face painting, interactive experiences and giveaways.

In 2022, shoppers across both Upper Canada Mall and Hillcrest Mall were excited to participate in Pride activations and we're thrilled to once again partner with York Pride to bring family-friendly fun to communities of Newmarket and Richmond Hill, said Leah Walker, General Manager of Upper Canada Mall and Hillcrest Mall, which will host a similar event in the same time window on Sunday, June 11. We believe in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for every member of our growing community and we're proud to celebrate Pride Month and support the York Region 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Sunday's event is the prelude to York Pride's Opening Ceremonies, Sparkling Night, which will take place Friday, June 16 from 6 to 11 p.m. at Riverwalk Commons in Newmarket's historic downtown.

It's all lights and love that will brighten up the night sky, say organizers. Get your sparkle on with us in Newmarket's historic downtown. Immerse yourself in elevated performances that will keep you energized for the entire weekend. Take part in the most anticipated York Pride event! Get ready to enjoy non-stop concerts, activities, food and more.

Friday, June 16, will be a mash-up of young emerging artists and your go-to favourite artists. You can expect wild and expressive dance, stunning solos and duos, bands, and, of course, mega amounts of drag.

The following afternoon, beginning at 3 p.m., the 10th York Region Pride Parade will take over Newmarket's historic Main Street.

Our small-town Pride vibe returns to Main Street in celebration of 10 years of the York Pride Parade and 23 years of Pride events in York Region, say organizers. This dazzling display of 2SLGBTQ+ brilliance showcases the beauty and strength in pride and self-expression, as we continue to show what community truly looks like. As the biggest event of the York Pride Festival, all eyes will be on our 2,500 marchers as over 50 floats and groups take over Main Street. Expect all your Parade favourites, from the famous rumble of the motor bikes to the quintessential community groups and the many wonders of our 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

Watch this year's theme, Sharing Our Stories, come to life from new viewing areas on the street on our premium viewing spaces with our partners as bigger floats, live music, and bubbles elevate the spectacle that is the Parade, along the entire revamped route from Ontario Street to Water Street.

York Pride's Closing Ceremonies will be ongoing throughout the day from noon until midnight back at Riverwalk Commons with high-energy, continuous performances.

We've searched far and wide to bring you some of the most creative street market vendors, where you may have a hard time just buying one item. We've also got 20+ community fair booths and several games and interactive zones to look into. Don't forget to journey onto Main Street to see the Pride window displays and affiliated events running at multiple venues. There's something for everyone all weekend long!

For more information about York Pride and upcoming events, including performer information as it is announced, visit yorkpride.ca.

By Brock Weir
Editor
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter