



HEU recognizes International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia – May 17

Since 2004, HEU's Pink Triangle Standing Committee has commemorated the International Day Against Homophobia – May 17– as part of its member and community outreach.

Six years ago, transphobia was included in recognition of transgender issues and discrimination, and also as an opportunity to raise awareness about the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity.

Then, last year, biphobia was added to address challenges bisexuals experience.

Now, known as International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia, May 17 celebrates sexual and gender diversity in a more inclusive way.

As a social justice union, HEU's been a pioneer in advocating for LGBTTI rights, same-sex spousal benefits, and employment equality – even negotiating anti-discrimination language in our collective agreements.

At HEU's 1994 convention, four equity caucuses were established, including the Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee (now the Pink Triangle Standing Committee) to recognize the diversity of our membership, advance and protect the rights of equity-seeking workers, and advocate against discrimination based on gender, race, ethnic background, disability or sexual orientation.

And in 2008, delegates to the union's biennial convention passed a resolution making the Women's Committee a standing committee as well.

May 17 is a landmark date because the World Health Organization finally removed homosexuality as a mental illness from its list of diagnoses on that day 25 years ago.

Now, May 17 is an opportunity for us to draw attention to the harmful impact of homophobia, and to recognize our LGBTTI sisters and brothers in our workplaces.

HEU is once again sponsoring a table at the International Day Against Homophobia Breakfast – hosted by Qmunity and Vancity – on Friday, May 15 at Vancouver's Fairmont Hotel (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.). This year's theme is *A Way Out*, addressing the struggles of LGBTTI refugees.

May 14, 2015