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LGBTQ ad-campaign 'Love is Welcome Here' wins gold at Hermes Awards

VICTORIA, B.C. – An innovative marketing campaign aimed at welcoming LGBTQ visitors to Greater Victoria has won gold at an international competition for advertising and PR professionals.

"Love is Welcome Here" was created by Hothouse Marketing and Tourism Victoria, and won gold in the Integrated Marketing Campaign category at the Hermes Creative Awards, announced this week.

The awards were chosen out of more than 6,000 entries from around the globe.

"Victoria prides itself on being a diverse destination that embraces the LGBTQ community, welcomes new friends and celebrates our shared humanity," Tourism Victoria's Acting Director of Marketing and Communications Jennifer Adsett says. "We are incredibly honoured to be recognized with this award. We would like to thank Hothouse Marketing, and the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, who administer and judge the Hermes awards, for considering this work."

Tourism Victoria approached Hothouse to create a strategic and highly engaging campaign targeting the LGBTQ community and encouraging them to share their experiences through various digital channels. They created a map — believed to be the first of its kind in the world — of gender-neutral washrooms in Greater Victoria. The map, available in print and online, shows washrooms nearest their location when viewing on their mobile phone. The campaign marketing was executed primarily online through programmatic advertising, with outdoor advertising in select markets.

"We were inspired by a story we heard when we attended a LGBTQ Healthy Saanich Sub-Committee meeting in the spring. A transgendered person told us she walks 15 minutes from her work to the local Starbucks because she doesn't feel comfortable going to the bathroom at work," Tourism Victoria's President and CEO Paul Nursey says. "The gender-neutral bathroom map was her idea, but Hothouse ran with it.

"To be successful in marketing a destination, you need to stand out and drive an emotional connection with the customer. This award is further reinforcement that Victoria is a welcoming and inclusive destination, and that Tourism Victoria takes a strategic and professional approach to marketing."

"We are thrilled with the award and for the opportunity to work with Tourism Victoria on this campaign," Hothouse Marketing's President Dan Dagg says. "It was a true team effort, and we're very proud of the work and the outcomes."

The Love is Welcome Here campaign is live at TourismVictoria.com/plan/lgbt-travel/. A list of winners can be found on the Hermes Creative Awards website at www.hermesawards.com.

About Tourism Victoria

Tourism Victoria (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) is the official not-for-profit destination marketing organization working in partnership with more than 950 business members and municipalities in Greater Victoria. TourismVictoria.com



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