

<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2014/06/27/toronto-holds-international-mass-gay-wedding-to-celebrate-world-pride-2014/>



Toronto holds international mass gay wedding to celebrate World Pride 2014

115 same-sex couples from across the world were married yesterday, in a free ceremony hosted in Toronto's Casa Loma.

An announcement on the official website of the mass wedding stated: "This is not only an elegant wedding, it is a message to the world... marriage is a right, not a privilege. You belong here."

The wedding was hosted by the LibertyEntertainment Group, which is taking on all costs with the exception of that of an Ontario marriage licence. It has been held as part of World Pride 2014, which is taking place in Toronto from 20 – 29 June.

The ceremony began with a welcome from Deputy Mayor Norm Kelly, and included an interfaith blessing, with officiants from twelve denominations. This included Sikh, Muslim, Humanist and First Nations representatives.

Couples were also given the option of a civil ceremony instead of the main religious ceremony. The event was followed by a mass reception and official after party.

In May, the organisers announced that they were hoping for enough couples to take part to break the current world record of 130 couples in a mass gay wedding.

Although the actual number has fallen short of that target, it is still believed to be the largest gay wedding ever held in North America.

Mass weddings for both gay and straight couples will also be held in London in August, albeit on a smaller scale, as part of the Southbank Centre's Festival of Love. Eight ceremonies are set to take place over two days, with package deals starting at £1000.

Canada's first same-sex marriages took place in June 2003, and equal marriage was legalised across the country in 2005.