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Counties ask public to celebrate Class of 2020

Grey and Bruce counties are asking residents and businesses across the region to celebrate the class of 2020 later this month.

The two counties are joining together to invite residents and graduates to “make history” with a collective at-home graduation celebration on June 24 at 7 p.m.

The regional celebration is being held to compliment virtual graduation ceremonies planned by many schools in the area, after the real thing had to be put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic and physical distancing. The event is designed to celebrate everyone who is graduating this year, including kindergarten, Grade 8, Grade 12, university, college, adult education, child care and any student moving up to the next level, according to a news release from the counties.

The public can highlight graduating students in their homes with the hashtag #Greybrucegrad2020 on social media to spread the word of all at-home and virtual celebrations on the evening of June 24.

Grey Roots Museum and Archives and Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre will be capturing the historical moment by saving posts with the hashtag. The photos, videos and artwork will be used in future displays to honour the graduates of 2020

A Grey Bruce Grad 2020 printable poster has been made available to be displayed in front windows. It is available to be downloaded for free on both county websites. Businesses and community groups can also make their own electronic messages and signs. And then everyone is encourage to celebrate at 7 p.m. on June 24 by making noise from their front yards and balconies by banging pots and pans, cheering, or blowing whistles. Local emergency services will also be asked to sound their sirens and flash their lights.

On Friday, principals at the Bluewater District School Board asked the community to help celebrate the 2020 graduates.

Owen Sound District Secondary School Principal Lucy Hilts asked that the community help wish them well by putting up signs of congratulations during the month of June. “This has been an unprecedented year for our graduating class, and one that none of us could have predicted,” Hilts said.

Hillcrest Elementary School Principal Kevin Wilson agreed, saying that Grade 8 students will not have the sendoff they normally receive each June. “We think a community recognition would go a long way in helping them to celebrate their achievements,” Wilson said. And Laurie Gilkinson, principal at Keppel-sarawak Elementary School, said their Grade 6 students are disappointed to be missing out on their final months after many spent eight years at the school.

“Wishing them well as they move on to Grade 7/8 is a wonderful gesture that our students and families would very much appreciate,” Gilkinson said.

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