

Ex-pro hockey player Brock McGillis educates and engages with students to combat homophobia in sport and in the halls.

Thunder Bay (November 29, 2017)—Former OHL player Brock McGillis is set to speak to students at three high schools in the Rainy River District School Board this week in an effort to educate and engage students to end the use of homophobic language. McGillis will share his struggle of being a closeted pro athlete and his empowering message of self love and inclusion while aiming to change the perceptions of LGBTQ athletes and individuals. Starting December 4, Brock will visit Atikokan High School, Rainy River High School on December 5 and Fort Frances High School December 6.

Growing up, Brock McGillis always thought hockey was his calling. After all, McGillis played in the OHL, professionally in the US and in Europe; as a goalie he was even viewed as a top prospect for the NHL. What most didn't know was the struggle Brock was having internally that lead to several injuries and bouts with depression. Brock McGillis was fighting an internal battle many are fighting; Brock was gay.

"For years I lived a life full of lies," states McGillis, "Growing up in a culture of hockey – minor hockey, the Ontario Hockey League, university hockey, and pro– I felt I would never be accepted. For years I lived a life of denial, because I'm gay."

In 2016, Brock came out publicly in an open letter to Yahoo! Sports. Since his coming out, Brock continues to coach elite level athletes, but knows he has found his true calling. "Since coming out I have seen a shift in dialogue among my players, homophobic language is rarely if ever used among my athletes" notes McGillis. "In seeing that shift in language I realized I could have a much bigger impact and change sport and culture by sharing my story."

Since coming out Brock has received thousands of messages of support via Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, even interacting with youth who share their struggle and have nowhere else to turn to for support. Brock continues to share his message of inclusion by aiming to combat homophobia in the rink, on the playground and in the halls of schools by speaking to youth.

To learn more about Brock and his journey follow him on Twitter [@brock_mcgillis](#), Instagram [@b_rock33](#), and Facebook [@brockmcgillis](#)

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