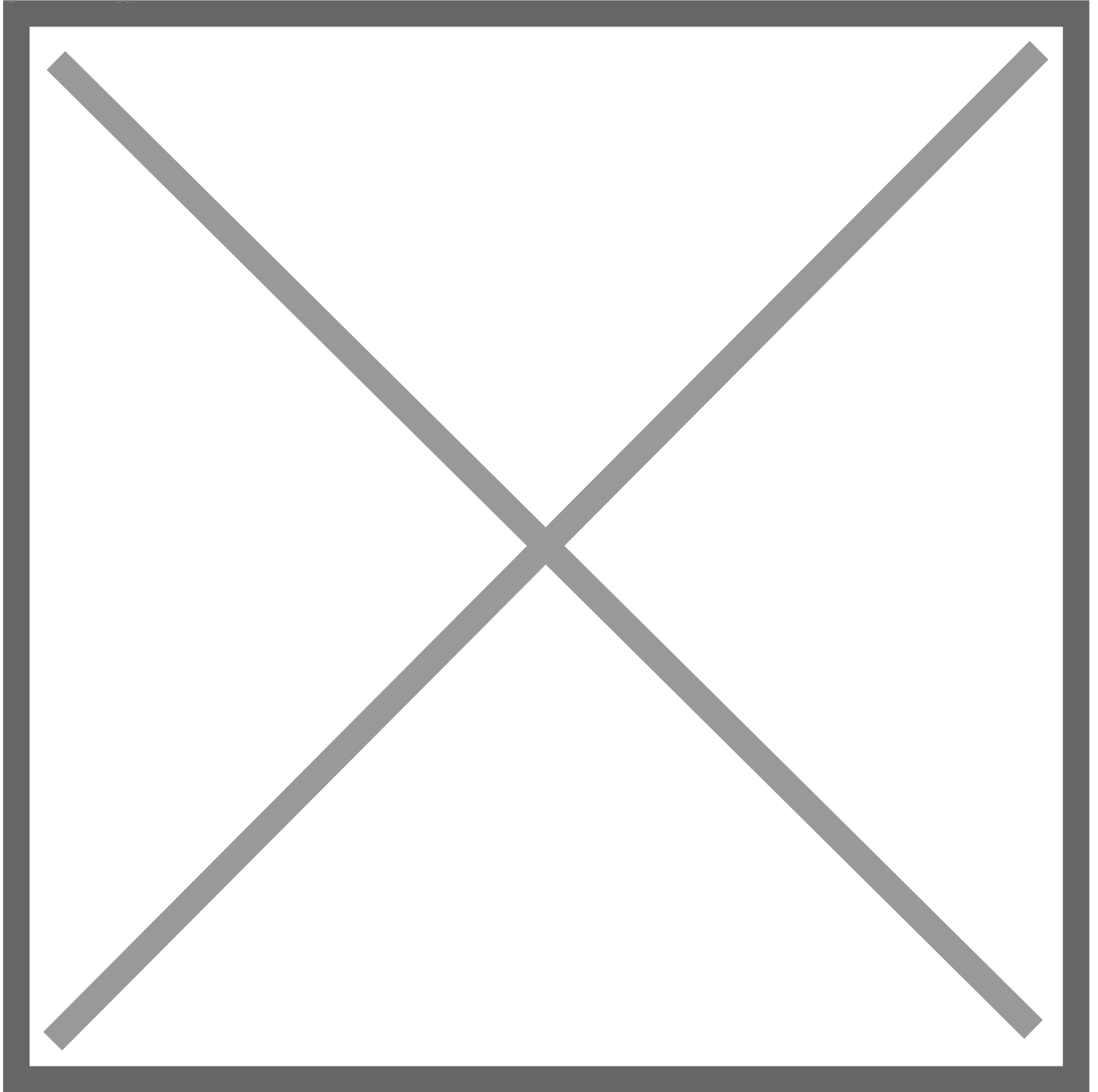


Celebrating Pride Month: Some of Toyota's LGBTQ+ Employees Share The Importance of the Month and Why They Enjoy Working for the Company

June 28, 2024

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Pride Month is a time to reflect on topics such as acceptance, equality, and resiliency. It's a celebration of the diversity that colors the LGBTQ+ community and an opportunity to learn about the history and issues affecting those who directly identify as part of this specific population.

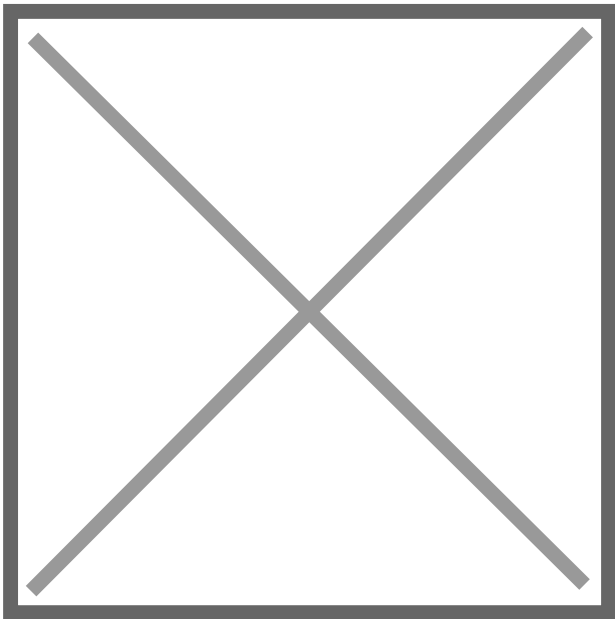
It's also a time to underscore the efforts done to help create a world where everyone can be proud of who they are. Some employees credit Toyota as helping cultivate these types of environments as the company strives for a welcoming, inclusive and safe place to work. Recently, Toyota was announced as ranking No. 2 in the "Top Company for LGBTQ+ Employees" distinction given by Fair360 (formerly DiversityInc).

“Diversity and inclusion have been a long-time strategy for Toyota in terms of recognizing the respective needs, talents and contributions of different communities,” says Joe Gonzalez, a manager in Warranty Finance and Recovery at Toyota and co-chairperson of the Internal/External Committee at the Plano HQ chapter for Spectrum, a Toyota business partnering group (BPG) that’s dedicated to supporting LGBTQ+ employees. “BPGs in general, including Spectrum, are integral in creating a sense of belonging for employees.”

Giancarlo Colberg, a Toyota legal manager and career development co-chair at Spectrum’s Plano HQ chapter, agrees.

“Spectrum, for me, was an eye opener of how far we can go within an international, well-respected company,” he says. “Having executives represented in each chapter also helps employees know their career path is limitless and anything is possible at Toyota.”

From engineering to talent acquisition, some employees share why they enjoy working for Toyota, what they would tell their younger selves, how Spectrum supports them and more.



It’s A Family Affair

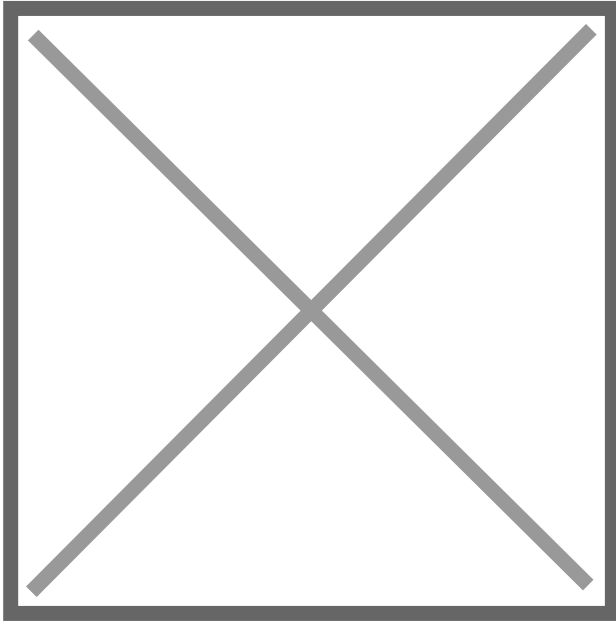
For Natalie Kallmeyer, working at Toyota means she can express her LGBTQ+ identity while excelling as a principal engineer in Electronic Systems and Wire Harness Design.

“Toyota has already done so much to support my identity,” she says. “Among other things, the support we have from the Spectrum BPG, our employee benefits, and little things like including preferred pronouns in our online communication tools.”

Since joining Spectrum, Kallmeyer is now a part of the BPG’s research and development board and a prominent member of the community.

Kallmeyer said she enjoyed celebrating Pride Month this year. She spent time with her family, attended community parades, and played softball and pickleball with friends. She said she also enjoys working at Toyota where kaizen—continuous improvement—remains the guiding principle.

“The spirit of kaizen doesn’t apply only to our standard work. We’re always working to not only make ever-better vehicles, but to be an ever-better place to work for all people and to be a stronger supporter of any marginalized community, not only the LGBTQ+ community,” Kallmeyer says.



Company Pride And Recognition

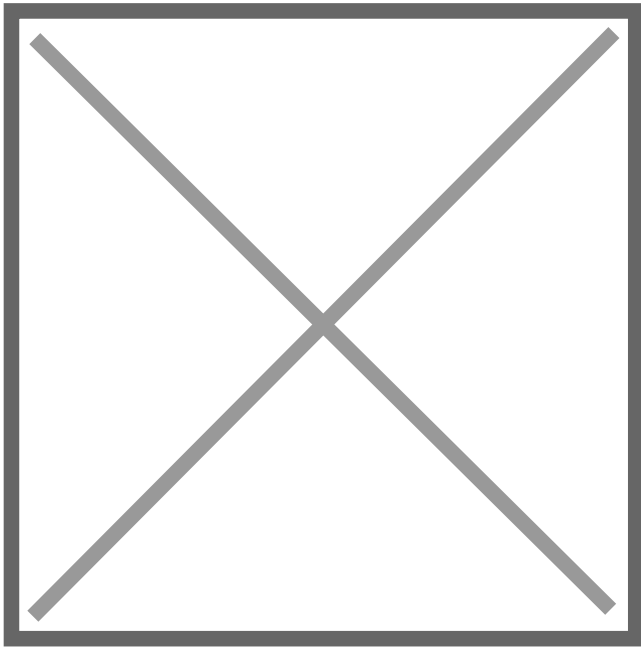
Greg Gilsinger, a team leader in HR Talent and Development at Toyota Texas (TMMTX), says he feels the company supports him.

“Working for Toyota, I have always felt welcomed to be my authentic self and have always felt respected,” says Gilsinger who has been with Toyota for 17 years.

For the sixth consecutive year, Gilsinger notes that a Pride Flag has flown outside the main lobby entrance of TMMTX. He says he sees it as a symbol of Toyota’s solidarity and recognition of the LGBTQ+ community.

“It sends a message of inclusivity and acceptance, fostering a positive work environment where employees can bring their whole selves to work without fear of discrimination or prejudice,” Gilsinger says.

On the No. 2 LGBTQ+ special recognition from Fair360, he comments: “Our results this year exemplify the heart of the Toyota Way, showing respect for people, acting for others, and reflecting our quest for continuous improvement. I’m a gay man, and the best part is that I work for Toyota! It can’t get better than that.”



Celebrating Community

Toyota Financial Services (TFS) group vice president and chief legal, compliance and administrative officer Ellen Farrell has worked at Toyota for nearly 25 years. She supports the Spectrum North America Advisory Council (NAAC), which dedicates itself to achieving equality and fairness in the workplace.

“Spectrum, like our other BPGs, works to help team members grow and develop, network, and support the communities in which we live and work,” she says. “It’s a great way for us to, as a company, engage in our communities and attract talent.”

She is excited about Pride Month because it celebrates LGBTQ+ individuals who have struggled in the past for representation.

“For me, Pride Month is a celebration,” Farrell says. “It’s a celebration of community; the LGBTQ+ community and our allies, and it’s been going on for over 50 years since Stonewall. And it’s a great way to show how much inclusion means to all of us in our communities.”

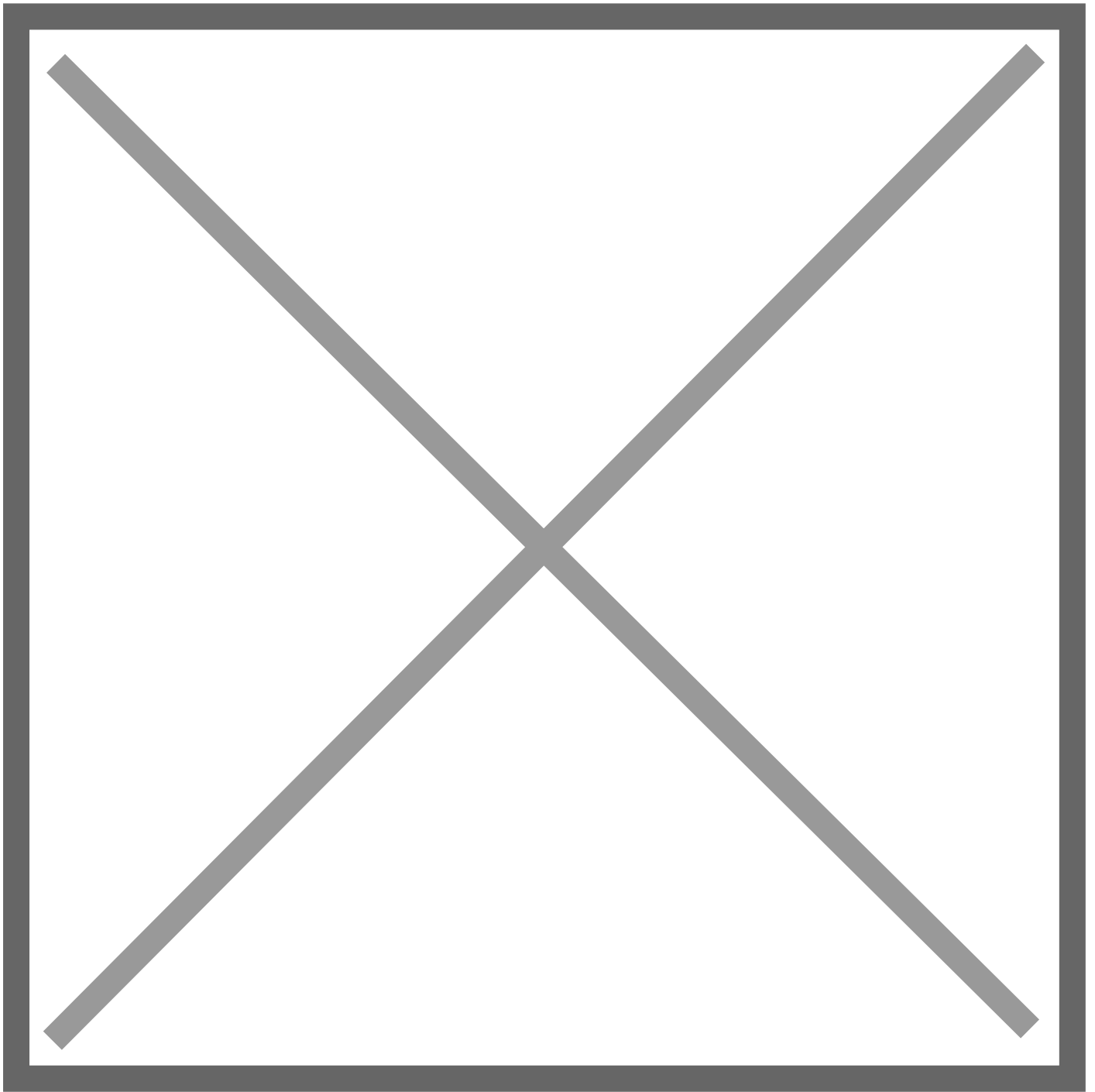
Moving Forward

For many members of the LGBTQ+ community, coming out isn’t always easy.

For Kallmeyer, when thinking about what she would tell her younger self, she adds, “Find out what makes you feel fulfilled and happy. Pursue it, but don’t do it for anyone else. Do it for yourself. Life is too short to spend time and energy trying to become anyone other than exactly who you are and who you want to be.”

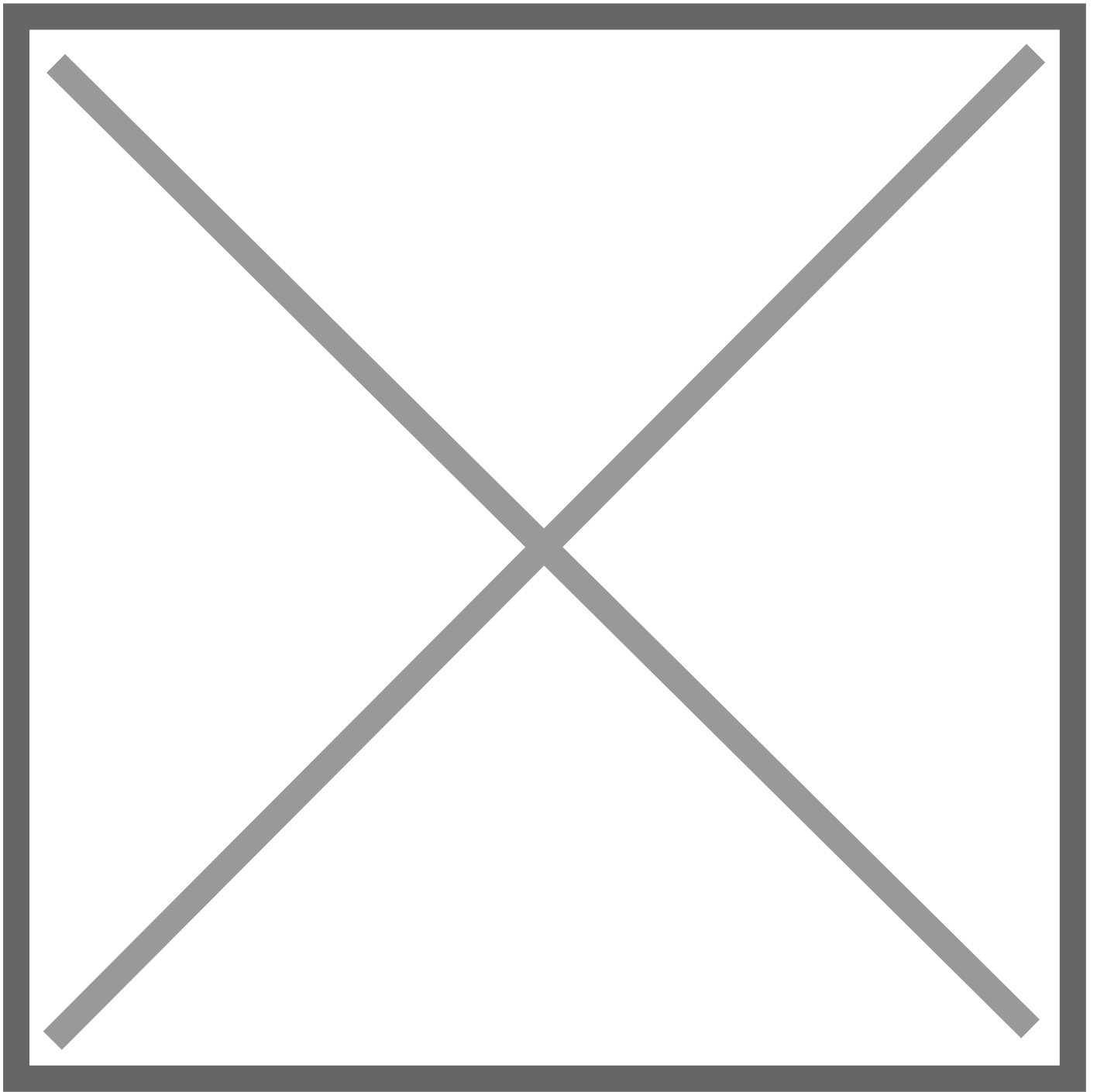
Gilsinger agrees with Kallmeyer.

“Life is all about the challenges you will encounter,” he says. “Always stay true to yourself, who you are and what you believe. Don’t compare yourself to others; everyone’s journey is unique.”



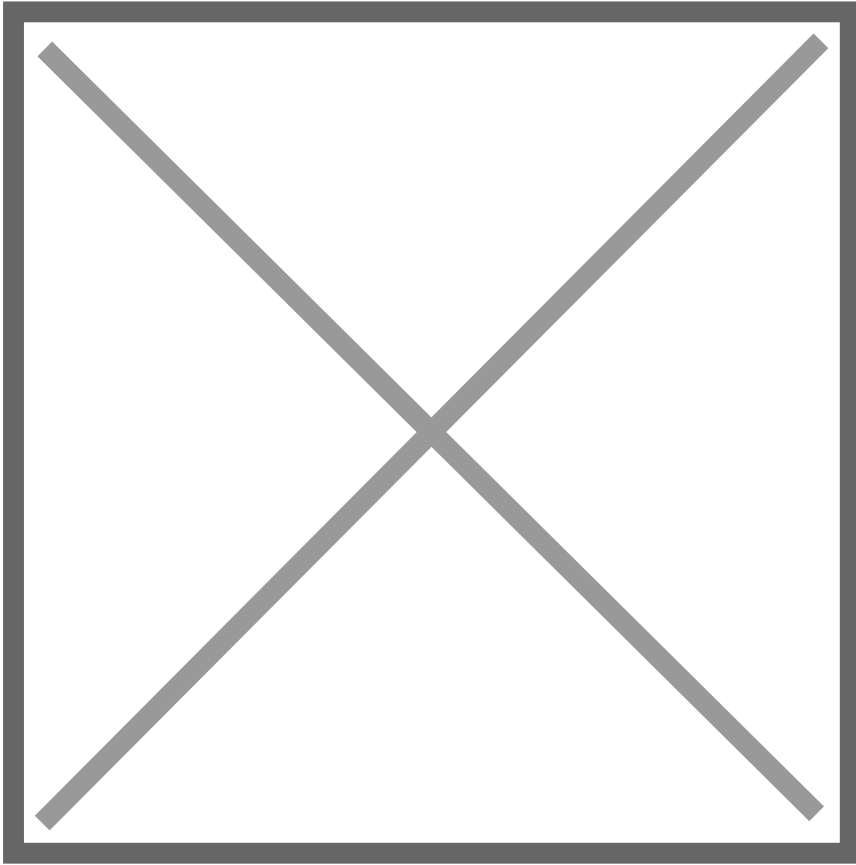
Respect For People

“By supporting the creation of Spectrum and supporting the LGBTQ+ community of employees, I believe it is showing that Toyota has a genuine commitment to one of its core foundational principles which is ‘Respect for People’,” says Robert Gallion, chair of the Spectrum Plano HQ chapter. “Anyone in the LGBTQ+ community, alongside other communities, values representation. Being able to see persons like you where you work at all levels in the company has incredible power. To see with your own eyes, and to know your community is included, supported, and, most importantly, valued by your employer, is fundamental to showing that persons of all diversities, all backgrounds are respected and are wanted.”



A Celebration Of Pride

For this year and into 2025, the Spectrum BPG plans to hold volunteer projects, educational events, and fun activities.



Some of the events and projects that Spectrum hosts include the Workplace Equality Summit in partnership with The Human Rights Campaign, educational town halls to connect with LGBTQ+ partners, such as Lambda Legal and the Dallas Resource Center. Spectrum also sets up panel discussions with leaders from the LGBTQ+ community and will create programming in collaboration with other Toyota BPGs.

“I genuinely hope they (employees) gain a sense of pride of knowing that they can be their authentic self every day at Toyota,” Gallion says.