

Press Clippings - 5/29/2024

- Chicago Tribune/ Courier News - Elgin Pride Parade and Festival to be even larger than last year, ELGbtq+ organizers say

By: Gloria Casas

Date: May 28, 2024



The Elgin Pride Parade and Festival is a daylong celebration organized by nonprofit ELGbtq+. This year's parade will boast 52 entries and the festival will take over all of Festival Park, organizers said.

ELGbtq+ made history last June with the first Elgin Pride Parade and Festival. On Saturday, the nonprofit is planning an even bigger event to celebrate the city's LGBTQ+ community.

"This year, the big difference is that it's not our first," said Travis Hooker, vice president of the ELGbtq+ board of directors. "We are going into it with a little bit of knowledge of what it takes to put a pride parade together."

An estimated 4,000 people lined the streets for the inaugural procession, which had 22 entries. This year there will be 52 entries when the parade steps off at 11 a.m., following a route that starts at Riverside Drive, heads to East Chicago Street and then to South Grove Avenue before ending at Prairie Street.

It's followed by the Elgin Pride Festival in downtown Festival Park, which Hooker said will feature more food vendors, bands and family activities than last year.

"We are using the whole park this year," he said.

Running from noon to 5 p.m., there will be 13 food trucks, an assortment of vendors, and live performances by Sweetie, Smokey Smothers, Elgin poet laureate Aron Ryan, Orisun, Bloodhype and Due of Kush. An official afterparty follows at 7:30 p.m. at the Martini Room, 161 E. Chicago St., for anyone 21 and older.



Sweetie is among the bands that will be performing Saturday at the Elgin Pride Festival in downtown Festival Park

New this year is a designated children's area for those with sensory sensitivity. ELGbtq+ wants to make sure the festival is inclusive for all, said Hooker, a retired Elgin police officer and owner of a consulting firm that specializes in teaching law enforcement agencies and others about diversity, equity, inclusion and the LGBTQ+ community.

ELGbtq+ learned a lot from last year's parade, Hooker said, including the need to arrange parade units differently to ensure the pageant's pace is steady. "We tried to put things in order this year to help reduce pauses in the parade," he said.

Participants include belly dancers, a local PFLAG organization, JP Morgan Chase Bank, six faith-based organizations, **School District U-46**, PADS and the Open Door Health Center of Illinois. PFLAG provides support, education and advocacy for the LGBTQ+ community and their families.

"Our faith-based organizations are really helping diminish the stigma of LGBTQ+ communities," Hooker said.

He's also proud of the number of children's' groups involved this year, including Youth Outlook. The Naperville-based organization supports LGBTQ+ youth by providing drop-in centers in northern Illinois for youth, caregivers and their families.

"We have youth groups. We have social service agencies. We have children's theater groups. We have our political allies and political partners. We're hitting it from a holistic viewpoint," he said.

In an interview Hooker recently viewed, someone who attended last year's festivities said they had felt oppressed for years, he said. That changed when they attended the

Elgin Pride events and for the first time felt embraced and accepted for who they were, he said.

“We really want this to be a celebration of Pride Month,” he said. “We want them to be active, vibrant members of our community.”

Hooker also noted that ELGbtq+ has lost one of its most active members, Kayla Bates, who founded the organization and was key to organizing the first Elgin Pride celebration. Although Bates had been involved in planning this year’s events, she recently moved out of town.

“I don’t think Elgin Pride would exist had it not been for Kayla,” Hooker said. While Bates won’t be involved next year, “she helped pass on her knowledge and she has prepared us well to keep this moving.”

- Daily Herald -

High school scores for May 28

Date: May 28, 2024



Fremd’s Cami Tofilon, left, and Barrington’s Kaitlin Taylor compete for the ball in the Class 3A Barrington girls soccer supersectional game on Tuesday, May 28, 2024.

Upcoming

Wednesday, May 29

Baseball

IHSA Sectional semifinals

Class 4A

At Lane

Elk Grove vs. Glenbrook North, 4:30 p.m.

At Hampshire

McHenry vs. Hampshire, 2 p.m.

Huntley vs. Barrington, 4:30 p.m.

At Stevenson

Stevenson vs. Prospect, 2 p.m.

Libertyville vs. Conant, 4:30 p.m.

At Plainfield North

Downers Grove North vs. Neuqua Valley, 2 p.m.

Waubonsie Valley vs. Plainfield North, 4:30 p.m.

At St. Charles North

St. Charles North vs. **South Elgin**, 5 p.m.

Lake Park vs. York, 2:30 p.m.

Class 3A

At Grayslake Central

Crystal Lake Central vs. Cary-Grove, 2 p.m.

Crystal Lake South vs. Deerfield, 4:30 p.m.

At Sycamore

Sycamore vs. Wheaton Academy, 4 p.m.

Benet Academy vs. Burlington Central, 6:30 p.m.

To read the full article, please click [here](#).