

CPCS Honors Pride 2022

“We call for the end of bigotry as we know it. The end of racism as we know it. The end of child abuse in the family as we know it. The end of sexism as we know it. The end of homophobia as we know it. We stand for freedom as we have yet to know it. And we will not be denied.”

Urvashi Vaid, Lesbian activist

We can and should all celebrate with great joy the dedication of June to expressing pride within the LGBTQIA+ (hereinafter LGBTQ) community, and that this year, Pride will again have more public, in person events across the United States, subject to safe COVID considerations. This visibility is essential, especially given the dramatic and painful reprisals impacting this community at the political level, such as attacks on teaching about LGBTQ issues in schools. Further challenge rests in the reasonable fear of the US Supreme Court reversing the precedent setting Obergefell decision supporting LGBTQ marriage rights, and Lawrence v. Texas, where a 6-3 Supreme Court vote overturned a state law criminalizing consensual private sexual contact by adults of the same sex, along with other matters involving important privacy rights. These precedents are now exposed to risk within the court majority evidently adopting a strict constructionist view to the right to personal privacy under the Fourteenth Amendment to our Constitution.

Sadly, there is no formally articulated Pride theme or parade for Boston this year. This reality, while unfortunate, provides a hopeful opportunity for the LGBTQ community to restructure and become more inclusive race and other intersectional ties to lead this signature effort going forward. In 2021, the Boston Pride organization shut down operations, in part because of long-term assertions that the group was not including people of color or transgender people as leaders. The disbanding of the Boston Pride organization without leaving room for others to take over is considered a final and harsh gesture to the LGBTQ community by an organization once depended upon for leadership and representation of this great celebration.

There is a deep history of exclusion that transcends the Stonewall Riots of 1969, which featured the dramatic community rejection of police reprisals and the taking of rights that fostered subjugation of the LGBTQ community. Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, two transgender advocates of color for homeless gay, lesbian and other transgender people, helped inspire and leverage the outrage on Stonewall that helped fuel sustained community protest. Unfortunately, many white, middle-class LGBTQ community members were later dismissive and hostile, showing Johnson and Rivera scorn, because of an unwillingness to accept transgender people as part of the movement.

This time of change brings new and positive examples, such as the upcoming Third Annual March & Festival for Black Trans Lives, a celebration based in Roxbury's Franklin Park led by Trans Resistance MA, a group evolving from the exclusion of BiPOC queer community members. In 2020, as another example, the New York City Heritage of Pride organization appointed a new executive board comprised of eight people of color, four women and one non-binary person. André Thomas, newly elected Co-Chair of the organization noted,

"Our members realize this moment requires new voices with more diverse, lived experiences – and while we are proud to see people of color make up over half of the Board for the first time, we know we still have work to do concerning trans, female and bisexual representation within our membership as well as our Board."

These evolving changes offer promise of inclusion that could result in an LGBTQ community that is more welcoming and supportive of all its members. There are important concerns that have yet to be addressed about the corporatization of Pride, and what relations will develop with emerging BiPOC leaders in local organizations – will the support of the past be in place, or will it change and become subject to charges of bias, and all at what cost to the community? Will local efforts maintain the edge so important to challenging the subjugation of the LGBTQ community, especially in these times, or will there be a lighter tone that is more comfortable to funders? The activist, Urvashi Vaid, was a lawyer who was born in India, who studied law in Massachusetts and became a powerful voice on the theme of LGBTQ pride across the lines of our intersectionality. Ms. Vaid sadly passed away in May 2022, but was famously noted for this quote:

"The LGBT movement has been coopted by the very institutions it once sought to transform."

No matter that the full picture is not fully in view, and that there are many struggles in the offing, this is a special moment for coming together. There is little doubt that there will be major annual Pride celebrations for Boston in coming years, and that future events will include leadership and representation across the entire LGBTQ community.

The LGBTQ community has proven resilient and determined against adversity from Stonewall, through the AIDS crisis, to the present, and visionary leaders will come forward to meet the challenge for change. Here's hoping that strength will come from better honoring the intersectionality that defines the LGBTQ community and each of us, proving that change is possible that expands minds, will and vision for the future. This challenge for racial equity and full inclusion in the LGBTQ community is no different than the need for racial equity across every institution and system in this country. Successful

change in the LGBTQ community will be inspiring and a sign of hope for all to come to terms with the unrelenting need for equality. For all the challenges that exists, the hope for new opportunity and meaningful inclusion gives reason to proclaim, Happy Pride Month!

Links of Note and to Events in Honor of Pride Month

Article: Boston Pride – needs a leadership team

<https://www.boston25news.com/news/local/large-scale-boston-pride-parade-not-happening-again-2022/C3GHHFVCN5BIPGUQCOIKXRBLVU/>

Article: NYC Pride Announces New, Diverse Executive Board

<https://www.nycpride.org/news-press-media/nyc-pride-announces-new-diverse-executive-board>

Website – National Parks Service – LGBTQ Heritage

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/lgbtqheritage.htm>

Pride Events Across Massachusetts

https://www.google.com/search?q=lgbtq+events+massachusetts+2022&rlz=1C1GCEA_enUS991US991&oq=lgbtq+events+massachusetts+2022&aqs=chrome..69i57j33i22i29i30.11350j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&ibp=htl;events&rciv=evn&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj796K3oZn4AhX1RTABHcI0DN4Q8eoFKAJ6BAgMEA8#htivrt=events&htidocid=L2F1dGhvcml0eS9ob3Jpem9uL2NsdXN0ZXJlZF9ldmVudC8yMDIyLTA2LTUwZDE3NjMyNzMwNjIzMjg0MjQzODA%3D&fpstate=tdetail

Boston Based Events

<https://www.boston.gov/news/events-happening-part-boston-lgbtq-2022-pride-month>

2022 Pride Events across the United States

<https://matadornetwork.com/read/pride-month-2022/>

Local Pride Month Themes for 2022

San Diego – “Justice with Joy”

<https://sdpride.org/0222/>

New York City – “Unapologetically Us”

<https://thecitylife.org/2022/03/26/nyc-pride-unveils-2022-theme-unapologetically-us/>

San Francisco – “Love Will Keep Us Together”

<https://sfpride.org/>

Washington, D.C. “reUNITED,”

<https://www.metroweekly.com/2022/03/capital-pride-unveils-reunited-theme-for-2022/>