

FAIRHAVEN'S GOT PRIDE!

What is Fairhaven's Got Pride!? I'll answer by beginning with the history of the first event. On Sunday June 27, 2021 at the corner of Center and Walnut Streets, an incredible event occurred when a gathering of over 400 people showed up to express their PRIDE in our community for being a Town that welcomes all.

The gathering on the corner that day was sparked by the governmental confusion that led to the Pride Flag not being displayed at Town Hall during the month of June. Because the previous years' display of the flag had been hard-fought, I felt the urge to not let the tradition die out after such a short amount of time. By reaching out to friends I learned that there was another woman in town who was thinking the same thing. So, Courtney Wilder and I were introduced just 10 days prior to the end of the June.

We both wished to make an impact on the Town in a way that would be celebratory, not preachy or political. We agreed that most Fairhaven residents are welcoming and accepting of not only the LGBTQ+ community but also the folks in other marginalized communities as well: people who have "different abilities" (not dis-abilities) and people of color. Marginalized groups are very often under-represented in government and positions of authority and they face less than equal opportunities for jobs, wages, housing and medical/mental healthcare. Perhaps most frightening is the statistic that pre and older teens questioning or knowing their sexual orientation are 3 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers. Yes, this occurs in Fairhaven just as in all towns and cities.

Courtney and I knew that the citizens of Fairhaven, when brought together to celebrate the Pride we have in striving to be a truly Fair Haven, could make an impact greater than two women working alone. Our plan was to invite the public to the corner to listen to some guest speakers from our town and hand out some bling. We were hoping to have maybe a dozen or two folks show up. Little did we know that word was spreading and by Sunday June 27th over 100 appeared at our "little, 30 minute" event and celebrated for 2 hours!

With the success of that day and the lingering love in the air, we knew we had to plan a Second Annual Fairhaven's Got Pride! event. We were going to ask interested people to join us in the planning and perhaps we could get a couple of businesses to somehow sponsor our endeavor. It turned out we would not have to seek people or businesses because they came to us. As a matter of fact, Howe Allen gave me his card and a generous offer to be a sponsor, that very day as the event was wrapping up. BASK has since reached out to me with their wanting to support the event as well. MOLIFE would like to be involved with the planning by possibly having a consumer join the planning committee as well as having their consumers, who wish to, help with the event itself.

With the creation of Fairhaven's Belonging Committee (to which I was appointed a member) last summer it was the perfect opportunity to form a subcommittee to plan and carry out our annual FGP! events. I held an open forum for people in our community to find out what FGP! is all about and join the subcommittee if they wish to. I now have 3 – 5 people who would like to serve so I will soon gather the participants via an electronic meeting of some type. At that meeting we will appoint a chair, secretary and treasurer then we'll be on our way!

At this point we've been tossing about ideas for the June event and looking into what permits and safety measures we may need. We are wanting to keep things simple in order to maintain the organic magic that occurred last June. Right now, we are thinking about a sound system, face painting, cotton candy & popcorn, sidewalk chalk, participating in the "Human Library" (HUMANLIBRARY.ORG) and creating a banner that says "I Am Proud Because:" where people can write what makes them proud.

I am very excited to be in the planning stage for the Second Annual Fairhaven's Got Pride! event and am looking forward to meet and work with new friends in our beautiful Town and surrounding communities.

Diane Hahn, Acting Chair FGP! Subcommittee

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