

Annapolis Pride Parade and Festival returns June 3



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The Annapolis Pride Parade and Festival is returning to downtown Annapolis for the third time next month.

Nearly 140 groups from around Maryland are expected to join in the festivities from noon to 5 p.m. June 3. The theme of this year's event is "Protecting LGBTQIA+ Youth."

"We are very proud of our theme this year," said Joe Toolan, chair of the Annapolis Pride board. "Protecting LGBTQIA+ youth is such an important issue in Annapolis but also across our state and nation."

Toolan pointed to data compiled by the LGBTQ suicide prevention organization Trevor Project that shows more than 150 anti-LGBTQ bills were pre-filled or introduced in legislatures across 23 states in the first two weeks of this year. Because of the recent debate around anti-transgender legislation, nine in 10 transgender or nonbinary youth say their mental health has been negatively impacted, Toolan said.

"As a result of these policies and debates in the past year, 45% of trans youth experienced cyberbullying, and nearly one in three reported not feeling safe to go to the doctor or hospital when they were sick or injured," he added.

The parade and festival were first held in 2019 before being canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. Last year, the event returned and [was twice as large as the first iteration](#).

Serving as the grand marshal for this year's parade is Annapolis resident Molly Estabrook, a board member of PFLAG, a nationwide support organization for LGBTQ+ people. Estabrook, who is originally from San Francisco, facilitates meetings and helps other parents learn how to support their queer children.

"What an honor it is to be Grand Marshal," Estabrook said in a news release. "Supporting queer youth has a huge place in my heart. I will continue to work hard to make our community one where the LGBTQ+ youth are safe and comfortable to thrive and shine. At a time when so many negative messages and harmful laws are making headlines, I want these kids to know they are loved, they are welcome, and they are supported."

Choosing Estabrook was an easy decision because of her advocacy of queer youth, Toolan said.

"Molly has been a tireless advocate for LGBTQIA+ youth and has become a tremendous resource for parents navigating the journey of supporting their queer child," he said. "Given the theme of this year's parade and festival, she is a perfect fit to be our grand marshal."

The festival will be held in The People's Park on Calvert Street, as well as West Street, between Calvert Street and Church Circle, and in adjacent parking lots. Nearly 200 artisans, businesses and community organizations are expected to attend.

There will also be plenty of music and food being showcased with an entertainment lineup on two stages boasting more than 10 musical acts, including Bryce Brown, L. Rodgers, Honey Sol, C. Rafter, Ronshaye Clark, M.E.G.A. YOUTH and Priddy Music Academy. Trans indie pop artist whatever mike will headline the music portion of the festival. Also, 35 food trucks have committed to the event.

Annapolis Pride has collaborated with Where in Annapolis to provide real-time parade and festival information through their app, which is available to download for free from Apple's App Store or Google's Play Store.