Black Lives Matter movement, LGBTQ+ community come together to show Annapolis that all Black lives matter

Donovan Conaway   June 30, 2020

Pride flags and signs waved in the sky garnering horns honking from passing cars near the Kunta Kinte-Alex Haley Memorial during the Pride and Black Lives Matter Unity March Monday in Annapolis.

The first stop for the crowd of about 100 was at City Dock at a painting of George Floyd, where they kneeled in silence while two artists, Jeff Huntington and Comacell "Spitfire" Brown, added the name of Tony McDade. McDade was a Black trans-man who was killed on May 27 in Florida.

The crowd chanted "Say His Name!" after the moment of silence. Then the crowd marched up Main Street and headed to Whitmore Park.

"We focused on the inclusion factor and welcoming and a space for the LGBTQ+ community in Annapolis and throughout the state," said William Rowel, senior adviser to the mayor. "What we know is there are hate crimes happening to Black trans women of color but also against members of the LGBTQ community."

Protestors gather in preparation to march. Unite with local leaders with Black Lives Matter and Annapolis Pride marched from Kunta Kinte-Alex Haley Memorial to Whitmore Park in solidarity for All Back lives to end racism, white supremacy, transphobia, homophobia and all forms of hate.

The marchers want to bring light to the injustices that happen to the Black community and the LGBTQ+ community.

"We have to show the unification between both communities, the LGBTQ+ and the Black community we have to come together if we want to show that all Black lives matter," said Keanuu Smith-Brown, lead organizer. "Today is about the togetherness and highlighting that. By coming together we are able to build a strong powerful force, one that can't be reckoned with unless we are divided."

Smith-Brown was proud to see the community out and show support the way they did, even for the bystanders watching, he wants them to get involved any way they can.

Mayor Gavin Buckley was one of those supporters that showed up to march alongside the crowd.

"What is beautiful is that this is a youth led march and a lot of marginalized populations are standing together to make sure politicians like myself don't just talk but do something," Buckley said. "I love that the pride flags are up in the city and it shows we are an accepting city."

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The second annual Annapolis Pride parade was canceled due to coronavirus. Jeremy Browning, Annapolis Pride founder, was also one of the organizers that helped put this march together.

Growing up in Annapolis, Browning remembers when there wasn't no visibility or awareness for the LGBTQ+ community and that is why he started Annapolis Pride.

Browning wants to hold politicians and community leaders accountable so they can write letters and checks in support to see change.

"It is important for us to show solidarity with the Black lives matter movement and we won't achieve full equality for the LGBTQ+ community without racial equality," Browning said. "With leaders and politicians together we can dismantle racism and white supremacy. We can't allow transphobia, homophobia and racism to continue. We need to come together to rise up against hate and end the dehumanization against people."