

# Christian Siriano to serve as grand marshal of Annapolis Pride Parade



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John-John Williams IV

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Christian Siriano, an Annapolis native, won the fourth season of “Project Runway,” and has become one of the reality show’s most successful and visible stars. (© Leandro Justen/Leandro Justen)

He’s conquered fashion week. His designs have slayed the red carpet during award season. And now Christian Siriano is coming home.

The Annapolis native will serve as grand marshal and keynote speaker June 1 for the annual [Annapolis Pride Parade & Festival](#), which is a major coup as the event enters its fourth year.

Organizers for Annapolis Pride Parade & Festival said they have been trying to get Siriano to participate in the festivities for years. But scheduling never quite worked out.

“Christian is from Annapolis, and we wanted him to come. Timing hadn’t worked out until this year,” said Joe Toolan, board chair of Annapolis Pride. “We were very excited. There have been times when he talked about the struggle growing up in Annapolis. And we’re just really excited for him to see how much Annapolis is shifting and how much more inclusive we’re working on making it.”

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Siriano, the first Marylander to ever win “Project Runway,” is not new to aligning himself with organizations and causes, having previously supported LGBTQ rights, a national gun violence prevention organization, Planned Parenthood, and actress Cynthia Nixon’s unsuccessful bid to be New York’s governor.

Siriano, a dogged businessman with design talents to match, has become a household name. And he got his start in Maryland.



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As an aspiring designer at 13, Siriano enrolled in the Baltimore School for the Arts. Although the school didn't offer a fashion curriculum, [he found a way to pursue his passion there](#). He would later go on to study under Vivienne Westwood and Alexander McQueen.

When he was 21, he won the fourth season of "Project Runway" in 2008. Siriano — the most successful and visible star from the reality show — has had many noteworthy celebrity clients, including former first lady Michelle Obama, Taylor Swift and Zendaya. Siriano rejoined Project Runway's 17th season in the role of mentor, which was previously held by Tim Gunn. And he's been a fixture on the hit show ever since.

Siriano isn't the only new thing happening during Annapolis Pride this year.

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Expect a longer and different parade route to accommodate the expected 10,000 people this year — up from almost 9,000 last year, according to Toolan.

"We have expanded," Toolan said, adding that the parade route now extends from Annapolis City docks up to Main Street and concluding at West Street.

The change in route and length will help with traffic congestion, Toolan explained.

"It actually allows us to take the route down to the water, which we have not been able to do before," Toolan said.

Singer — and current "The Voice" contestant L. Rodgers — will perform during the festival portion of the day. Rodgers has performed at Annapolis Pride before, according to Toolan.

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Correction: This story has been updated to correct the year that Christian Siriano won the fourth season of "Project Runway."

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