



## **Pride Festival of Central PA**

October 2013

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Dear LGBT Community and Friends,

Over the past 44 years, since the nation's very first pride marches took place in Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, and New York City on the 1st anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, gay pride parades have become a tradition across our country and in cities all over the world.

The first pride marches were both serious and fun; meant to inspire and grow a movement while also serving as a reminder of the historic riots that took place on a little street in New York City's Greenwich Village in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969.

Having evolved from raucous and radical protests into festive joyful street parties with decorative floats, talented marching bands, and all kinds of well known and political personalities; pride parades have become an important showcase to celebrate our community's diversity, history and the important work still left to be done in making all LGBT citizens truly equal partners in the American Dream.

What we know of today as "pride" and the "pride festival" in central Pennsylvania evolved a little differently than our sister cities and began with a festival entitled "Open Air."

At the time, organizers discussed how people might be afraid or unwilling to attend a "pride" event in this area. After much discussion, the name "Open Air" was chosen to represent the fact that the community could come together in the light of day. Pink helium balloons served as the signal at an otherwise unremarkable entrance to the festival held just outside Harrisburg.

The event moved a few times and has grown into what we know of today as the Pride Festival of Central PA.

We know how very important and symbolic parades are in our larger LGBT heritage but in central Pennsylvania our pride roots are found in our festival, not in a parade.

It is with these thoughts in mind that we are formally announcing there will be no pride parade in 2014 or in the subsequent years.

This decision was not made lightly, but when we add up the parade expenses and compare them to the parade attendance numbers, suspending the parade indefinitely is the most prudent course of action for the organization at this time.

In these challenging times, when every dollar counts and every volunteer's time precious, we feel our resources are better spent on focusing all of our efforts and energies on growing and making the Pride Festival of Central PA a premiere top notch event.

All of us on the board are both saddened and disappointed with this announcement, but I can absolutely assure you that all of our best efforts and talents are being poured into planning some new and very exciting attractions and happenings for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Pride Festival of Central PA.

No doubt, the 2014 festival will be one of our best and most fabulous ever. We hope to see as many of you there as possible to help us strengthen and keep our great central Pennsylvania pride tradition moving forward.

For the entire Executive Board,

Brad Martin  
President