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Des Moines celebrates pride month over the weekend

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The East Village was filled with pride and positivity this weekend as people flocked to the capitol to celebrate pride, love and acceptance.

The Capital City Pridefest 2017 took place in Des Moines from June 9-11 and was filled with live music, dancing, drag shows and a parade. Pridefest, often called "Pride," is an annual event put on by Capital City Pride, an LGBT group based out of Des Moines.

PHOTOS: Capital City Pride Festival

The Capital City Pride Festival was in Des Moines the weekend. Here are some photos from the event.

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The festival kicked off on Thursday with a performance from the Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus, who also performed on the main stage Sunday afternoon. Click [here](#) to see a video of their parody of Belle, from Beauty and the Beast.



The Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus filled the East Village with music. In this song, they are singing with a few drag queens.
Ian Steenhoek / Iowa State Daily

Rebecca Gruber, who has conducted the group for 11 years, was awarded the Grand Marshal award. When asked why she conducts the group, she spoke about building relationships.

"The older I get the more I understand that this life is about relationships," Gruber said.

She explained how the choir is a way to build relationships, not only with these men who may need it, but also to build a connection within the community. She added that it is also great fun to be surrounded by men's singing voices.

The festival continued on Friday with a grill out at Blazin' Saddles, as well as another performance from the Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus.

On Saturday and Sunday, the gates opened to Pridfest at 12 p.m. and allowed people to wander around and visit various booths which sold merchandise, food, candy and clothes. There are also a variety of performances from singers and dancers throughout the day.

The 38th annual Capital City Pride Parade happened on Sunday as well. Over 20 organizations marched down Grand Avenue and Locust Street in support of Pride month.

PHOTOS: Capital City Pride Parade

The 38th annual Capital City Pride Parade took place on June 11 in Des Moines. There were over 20 various organizations marching in the parade. from LGBT groups to political figures and churches.

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One parade-goer, Kathy O'Donnell, has been attending the parade and festival almost every single year since she moved to Des Moines about 15 years ago from Indianapolis.



Parade-goer Kathy O'Donnell excitedly uses her phone to take a picture. O'Donnell has been attending the Capital City Pride Parade for 15 years now.

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When asked why she attends these events every year, she said "You get one time out here. You see a lot of people. You get to see friends. It's nice that we can all get together and celebrate our similarities."

After the parade, O'Donnell planned to check out a concert and some of the vendors downtown.

For other people, this was their first Pride event ever. Kjerstin Hasselblad, a sophomore at DMACC, is a first year Pride-goer. When asked what she likes about the event, she first said "being surrounded by gay people" and then followed up with "I don't have to worry about what I have to say or do. You're just accepted. It feels amazing."

It was also Lauryn Brown's first Pride event. Brown said that they like the "acceptance and positivity" and that everyone is "colorful and smiley."



Kjerstin Hasselblad (left) and Lauryn Brown (right) attending their first Capital City Pride Festival.

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Several Iowa State students were also in attendance of the event, including Vice President of the Student Body Cody Smith.

"I love Pride month because it's a time for those who are often overlooked or brushed aside to celebrate their own unique story of being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender," Smith said. "Today I saw hundreds of Iowans celebrating the truest versions of themselves and I was ecstatic to stand with them."



Vice President of the Student Body poses for a picture at the Capital City Pride Parade.

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