



**A Message from  
TriPride's Board of Directors  
2020**

# TriPride 2020: You Can't Keep a Good Pride Down

2020 started out so well. TriPride was poised to complete its initial circuit of the Tri-Cities by holding our parade and festival in Bristol. After the first two years' successes, we were excited and ready to make the 2020 TriPride celebration the best one yet. TriPride got a head start on the 2020 pride parade and festival with our partners at the twin cities of Bristol, Tennessee, and Bristol, Virginia. By March, we were well ahead of schedule with the planning and organizing. Our partners in Bristol, of both states, were professional, cordial, and eager, and willing to have TriPride in August.

Of course, we all know the Covid-19 story. In April, TriPride was one of the first regional organizations to cancel our 2020 event. This was not a light decision by any means, but the board felt it was the most responsible thing to do. Fundraising and event planning were put on pause. However, that didn't mean our engagement with our community, you all, should be paused.

The question TriPride's board and organizers scrambled to answer was this: How do we continue to stay relevant, stay connected, and stay engaged with our community since we can't have the event? We brainstormed virtually. We learned from other Pride organizations. We searched for ways to show our commitment as an organization during a year where our normal operating procedures were insufficient to the challenges at hand. Time will ultimately tell, but I think we had some wins this year despite the new challenges and new opportunities presented by 2020.

During June, LGBTQ+ Pride month, we provided free 3' x 5' rainbow flags to anyone who wanted one, although we did charge postage if we needed to mail them.

“I wanted to send a thank you to everyone that made the pride flags available this year. We picked ours up yesterday and my young daughter was so excited she had herself wrapped up in the car with it. As a mom and an ally, your work makes a big difference in my ability to educate her and plant seeds of change in her generation. Thank you for who you are and all you do!

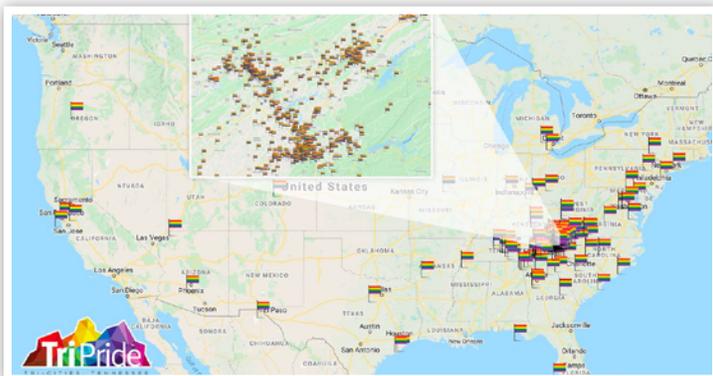


Over 1,000 Pride flags were provided to community members, far and wide. Some went as far as California and Oregon, requested by our community members who grew up here but had moved away. We partnered with local businesses in Bristol, Kingsport, and Johnson City to be pick-up points. Within the first 24 hours of announcing the Pride flag giveaway, we had gone through our supply. However, one of those businesses, Red Door Agency, felt compelled to step up with a donation that allowed us to get another order of Pride flags. Because of their generosity, we were able to continue to give out Pride rainbow flags for the duration of the month.



*“Got mine today. Thank you so much. My husband and I are happy allies as I have LGBTQ family and believe EVERYONE should have equal rights.”*

TriPride also participated and lent our talents and voice to another effort in June: the Pride Car Parade. This effort was not organized by TriPride, but we were thrilled to participate in and promote it. The parade, which meandered through Johnson City, was an absolute success. Dozens of vehicles, decorated with flags, banners, balloons, and more, wound through downtown and looped the city. Folks honked and waved as the caravan drove past.

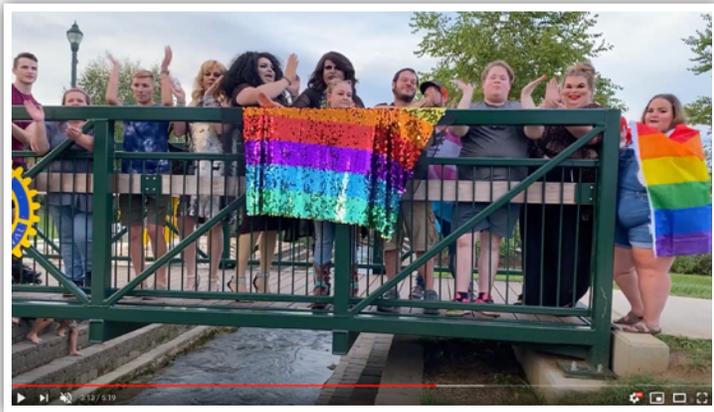


Families, friends, and individuals beamed and smiled as car after car, decked out in rainbows, paraded across the city. This event was such a success that we hope to incorporate it into the yearly Tri-Cities calendar.

One final piece of our June Pride celebration came when local business “Craig’s Crown Cutz Academy” in Johnson City offered free haircuts for any one celebrating Pride.



During August, TriPride approached local musician Beth Snapp to do a cover of “Higher Love.” Snapp collaborated with four other talented artists, including renowned cellist Dave Eggar, to produce the cover. TriPride then reached out to community members to record themselves lip-syncing to the song and compiled the clips to create a Pride video. The video debuted on August 29, 2020, which would have been the day of our parade and festival. The video reached nearly 14,000 people on Facebook alone.



Watch it here: <https://youtu.be/9WkFuobwa00>

***“When I was first approached by TriPride to cover this tune, my first thought was, wow, they hit the nail on the head thematically! To choose a song that calls for a higher love, and peace between neighbors, is the most imperative message we can be spreading. I was so proud to get to be a part of that message.”***

***- Beth Snapp***

Additionally, the band Demon Waffle produced a wonderful music video to share with the TriPride community. The band was scheduled to perform at the 2020 festival, and TriPride hopes to have them on our stage as soon as we can.

Throughout the year, TriPride has continued to grow and use our social media as one of our primary tools for engaging the community, including important topics like encouraging viewers to complete the 2020 Census, to get registered to vote and to vote (although we did not, per our non-profit status, endorse or advocate for any particular candidates), and encouraging our audience to continue Covid-19 precautions and best practices. Our growing presence on social media has allowed TriPride to become an information resource to our community. Community members get in touch with us on a broad range of topics, and we try to help however we can, even if that’s pointing someone in the right direction.

In October, TriPride had its Board of Directors election. The election saw four new faces joining the board as other members stepped off, having fulfilled their term. Those who stepped down included our original President, Kenn Lyon, and our original Vice President and founder, George Chamoun. We hope you’ll join the new Board of Directors in wishing Kenn and George, and the other former board members, well on new adventures!

So what does 2021 look like for TriPride? Will we have the parade and festival in the fall in Bristol? The truth is, we don’t know at this point. As with so many elements and so many organizations, the uncertainties caused by Covid-19 continue to exist. We will begin having conversations with Bristol representatives soon. We continue to engage with the Planning Committee on contingency plans.

What we are certain of, however, is that we will continue to advocate for, and work with, our LGBTQ+ and allied community -- no matter what. You can’t keep a good Pride down.

Thank you for your continued support during this trying year, and thank you to those who were able to donate to the organization. As soon as we can, we’ll be back in Bristol with bells and whistles, rainbows, and glitter. We can’t wait.

In Pride,

TriPride Board of Directors, 2020  
[www.tripridetn.org](http://www.tripridetn.org)