From:	Amie Whittemore
To:	Craig Tindall
Cc:	Erica Stone; Jessica Gaby; Elizabeth J. Myers; Kerri French; Amy Harris-Aber
Subject:	[EXTERNAL]- RE: Boro Pride Festival
Date:	Thursday, October 27, 2022 12:15:21 PM

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Dear City Manager Craig D. Tindall,

We are writing to express our disappointment in your decision to deny Boro Pride a future permit to hold its annual festival. This demonstrates a deep lack of empathy for marginalized populations in our community and a lack of what we consider family values—values of compassion, openness, and generosity of spirit. We strongly urge you to reconsider your decision.

We, the undersigned, represent educators, parents, and professionals in Murfreesboro. This includes its former Poet Laureate of Murfreesboro, founder of Write with Pride, a series of writing workshops and open mics for LGBTQ+ teens in middle Tennessee, in partnership with Southern Word. Write with Pride offers a space for young people exploring their gender and sexual identities to find community and a safe place because Tennessee's legislature has passed legislation that denies and threatens their existence. The Boro Pride Festival is a place where such young people can gather with their families safely; it is also a place where they can see others in the community actively supporting their identities. To take this public and celebratory event away is detrimental to the mental health of LGBTQ+ teens—and adults.

Some of us are parents, and our family values include open sharing of information and support of our children's identities, which includes enthusiastic attendance at Pride and other events that promote equality and inclusion. Nothing about the festival forces families to attend, so families who don't share these values could choose not to attend.

Furthermore, your decision is based on a limited, problematic view of sexuality. To assume that all families want to shield young people from their own sexuality is limited and presumptive. Studies show that age appropriate open dialogue about sexuality and safe sex practices prevents the spread of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy (sources cited below). Pride offers a low-stress, fun way for families to explore these conversations about an important component of the human experience.

In closing, your decision is short-sighted. It does not engage the festival planners in a dialogue that might help you understand their work and the history of Pride. It assumes that every family has the same values. It is heartbreaking for the LGBTQ+ community in middle Tennessee. We strongly suggest that you reconsider your decision. At minimum, the city should open a community dialogue about the importance of Boro Pride in our community.

Sincerely,

Kerri French
Jessica Gaby
Amy Harris-Aber
Elizabeth Myers
Erica Stone

Amie Whittemore

Studies affirming the value of comprehensive sex education in preventing STI transmission and unwanted pregnancies:

1. https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2016/11/comprehensive-sexuality-education
2. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34344580/
3. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/whatworks/what-works-sexual-health-education.htm
4. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7482983/

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