

Press release

Paekakariki Pride Festival has gone to the dogs



Pictured: Robbie the Cor-gay, resident of Paekakariki and regular Pride Parade goer. Image: Val Little

Shortly after 2020 kicked off – the world was plunged into bubbles, lockdowns, and social distancing and mask wearing became the norm. We’ve come out the other side of this strange and sombre time knowing how much a worldwide pandemic has affected us, how we connect with each other and what, and who, is really important to us. And we’ve come out wanting to celebrate and, most of all, to PARTY!

The Paekakariki Pride Festival over Labour Weekend was one of many festivals that was on-again-off-again and now it’s definitely on!

This is the fourth year of the festival and this year it’s gone to the dogs. With a combined picnic and Scruffs Dog Show on the Sunday, prizes will be on offer for best-dressed, most butch, best handbag dog, lookey-likey, worst behaved and a range of other surprise categories. “Last year we catered for the kids of the village with a disco and this year we thought we’d open it up for the fur kids!”, says Pat McIntosh, dog show co-ordinator and Paekakariki Pride Inc committee member. Inspired by the number of dogs who join their people in the parade each year, Pat ran with the idea of a village dog show to be held in conjunction with a picnic. “It’s caused a bit of controversy”, says Pat, “some people felt quite strongly that they couldn’t possibly dress their dogs in the same outfit twice in one weekend, so we’re encouraging them to either find new outfits or chuck on the same one and teach their dog a new trick or two.”

There’ll be the usual staples of the (World’s (unofficial) shortest) Pride Parade, the dance party and the quiz – and this year we’ve added two new free events that are bound to be a big hit with festival goers. The Village Rainbow Beautification Project invites village people

in Paekakariki (and beyond) to decorate their properties, fences, letterboxes, gardens and businesses with rainbow creations for the month of October. The purpose of this is for Paekakariki to show its support for Rainbow community members and to highlight the importance of a society that is diverse and inclusive. Already, several village dwellers have painted birdbaths, hung rainbow bunting and chalked creative designs on their driveways. “The rainbow is a powerful symbol of hope, inclusion and pride for those of us from the LGBTQIA+ communities”, says Val Little, one of the festival organisers, “we seek out these images and symbols and when we see them we know we’re welcome and safe.” “We love the way Paekakariki gets behind this festival – everyone from kids and grandparents, schools, businesses and households show their love and support for the Rainbow communities.” One of the major goals of the festival is to showcase the intersection between the Rainbow communities and the village to show the rest of the country, and the world, how inclusion looks.

In keeping with the 2020 theme of mask wearing, the dance this year is aptly named a ‘Mask-erade Party’. Party goers can either wear mouth masks or fancy eye masks – a tip to the whole concept of 2020 being about vision – or both! Festival organisers don’t want to make light of the devastating effects COVID-19 has had on so many families and lives but rather to celebrate that with good health practices and by working together Aotearoa/New Zealand has managed to keep its team of five million mostly unified and now able to enjoy connecting with one another.

Proceeds from this year’s festival are being donated to queer youth support groups in the Kapiti area.

If you’re looking for something fun and fabulous to do over Labour Weekend, dress up your dog, grab your mask and head to the friendly sea-side village of Paekakariki because when it comes to Pride – we’re off the leash!

For further information and updates check out the Facebook page - Rainbow in the Village – Paekakariki Pride Festival 2020 - <https://www.facebook.com/PaekakarikiPride/>