

Pride and Joy *families*

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Special Pride Edition



Embracing Pride

by Beren DeMotier

It wasn't all that long ago that bringing your kid to Gay Pride was like bringing your family pet. People stopped, stared, petted, but the event wasn't very user friendly. There wasn't enough shade, water or potties available for those urgent needs. The vast majority of floats had "mature" themes and it was crystal clear that Pride was an adult event and kids were merely "extra."

But that seems to be changing as more and more we hear a lot about the issues surrounding kids at Pride, including ways the Parades and Festivals in many cities are being tailored to include kids. This is fitting because the definition of Pride seems to have evolved over the years, from "Party Hearty" to a celebration of the breadth and depth of the community in all its variations. Including the growing numbers of us who have children—both men and women.

And if it is for the whole "Queer" community and we're stressing inclusion, shouldn't we be able to bring our kids to Pride and have it be for them too? However, there's theory and there is practice. We didn't expect a G-rated event when we decided to go for it last summer. We braved the parade with kids in tow anyway. Originally, we weren't even really planning to go. It had been a heck of a week. Colds had reduced us to a sodden, adenoidal mass, job issues were keeping us awake, and the end of the school year was stuffed with class picnics, teacher gifts and the baking of cookies. Plus, we hadn't taken the kids since they were little—since they were too young to ask what that man was wearing or not yet able to read the signs delineating someone's sexual proclivities.

But, despite exhaustion, and the issues at hand, we decided it would be an optimistic thing to do—going to Pride with our kids. We were also feeling a little bit of shame about even considering skipping it, since large numbers of our church congregation were marching, and it was the least we could do to go. It was a good decision.

At first, I became rather tense because of the population density downtown (I don't do crowds), and the propensity of our children to act like children: up, down, back, forth, motion, motion, motion. But, after we found a spot under a little tree where we were close enough to the sidewalk yet sheltered from direct sun, I started to relax. The kids were pretty blasé about the whole thing. The crowd didn't phase them and they didn't even notice the tattoos and piercings. *(continued on page3*

"And if it is for the whole "Queer" community and we're stressing inclusion, shouldn't we be able to bring our kids to pride?"

Family Pride

Picnic

Sunday June 5

3-6 pm

Recreation Park

Binghamton

RSVP

724-4308



Embracing Pride (continued from page 1)

The glamorous and statuesque drag queen doing the color commentary didn't raise an eyebrow, and I think the only thing they really objected to was all the smokers.

Though, as I expected, there were a number of prosthetic penises poking out from under kilts that I could have done without. And the woman in the chariot lashing her motorcycle mama (both in lace underwear) probably raised some question for our innocent tykes sitting a few feet away, but so far they haven't figured into any before bedtime chats.

What did happen, was the wonderful sense of community. As my wife said later, it was what we were always hoping for. We went to breakfast with a good friend before the parade and met up with friends of hers later. They sat along the sidewalk a few feet ahead of us and all through the parade our kids ran back and forth between us and them. I watched as these women grabbed a necklace thrown from a float only to hand it to my daughter. We watched as one of them held our son's hand and walked him over to where the Metropolitan church was handing out frisbees.

Of course, my glow of community feeling was also an after effect of the parade itself. I always get emotional at these things. I cry when PFLAG goes by (doesn't everybody?). and feel warm gratitude when politicians actually take part. When the swarms of religious organizations marched by someone yelled out. "there go the real christians" and it felt good.

Our children were just two of dozens I could see from where I stood and the parade went on for blocks. It felt right. Not like they were extra appendages to the adults that wanted to go, but real participants of the parade. And by their very presence, these children bring a new perspective to the meaning of Pride. We saw the celebration through the eyes of someone who has never considered the possibility that there is anything wrong, different or "mistaken" about the people he or she loves. We should all see ourselves through those eyes.

Beren DeMotier is a freelance writer from Portland Oregon and a lesbian mother of two.

End of School Picnic!



Check out the Pride and
Joy Listserv or call (607)
724-4308 for more info.

Saturday June 25, 2005

1:00-3:00 PM

Harris Hill

Elmira

