



For Immediate Release  
October 2, 2006  
Santa Cruz, California

## The Diversity Center Shakes Up LGBT Pride in Santa Cruz County

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The Diversity Center is shaking up the concept of Pride in Santa Cruz County. A new committee has come together to plan Santa Cruz' 34<sup>th</sup> annual Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride. Their vision is to create a Pride that showcases and celebrates the gifts and talents of our LGBT community while honoring the struggles of the past and acknowledging the essential work yet to be done.

In 1974 Santa Cruz held its first Gay Pride. A committee pulled together a series of workshops, a music night, a dance at the Vets Hall, and a picnic in San Lorenzo Park for about 200 people. A memorable highlight of the day was a tug-of-war between the gay men and the lesbians. From these beginnings, Santa Cruz' LGBT Pride has expanded dramatically. In June 2007, 650 participants in 45 groups marched down Pacific Avenue with an estimated 7500 people cheering them on. More than 5000 people attended the rally in San Lorenzo Park to watch performers and speakers on the Pride stage, shop and gather information at more than 70 booths, and socialize at one of the friendliest Prides in California.

Building on that success the new committee plans to answer calls from the community to make the event even more fun. The tone of the event will change, starting with some names. "What's been called a march we'll now call a parade. And what we've called a rally, we'll now call a festival" said Jim Brown, The Diversity Center Executive Director. "The priorities of the LGBT community have changed as the social and political landscape has changed" Brown added.

Some plans being discussed now for 2008 include: longer time slots for performers on stage, games, magicians and other performers at the festival, and an outdoor gallery for local LGBT artists. Partnering with theatres, galleries, and dance studios to present the work of local and regional LGBT artists is yet another idea.

*for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning Individuals*

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Brown said, "Putting on a free, grassroots event of this scale is a lot of work, but with these engaging themes we hope to draw in people with new ideas and energy. It is a wonderful feeling to be involved in a community creation like this. The more community members that participate the better."

Santa Cruz' LGBT Pride is set for Sunday June 1, 2008 with the Parade on Pacific Avenue and the Festival in San Lorenzo Park. The Diversity Center invites the community to get involved now to help produce this important event. Contact Jim Brown at the Center at (831) 425-5422 or email [info@santacruzpride.org](mailto:info@santacruzpride.org).

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