

Paint the Rainbow: how to support the LGBTQIA+ Community



LGBTQIA+ Pride March taken on June 7th, 2017

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In consideration of the recent controversy around an anti-gay centered Christian podcast created by AHS students, the responsibility of Aspen High School, the Roaring Fork Valley community, and individuals to support the LGBTQIA+ community must be addressed.

According to a recent survey, 1 in 6 Generation Z individuals identify as LGBTQIA+, and the numbers continue to grow. The study also showed that the majority of LGBTQIA+ individuals identify as bisexual, and that ideology affiliation affects LGBTQIA+ identification, with 13.0% of political liberals, 4.4% of moderates and 2.3% of conservatives identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Yet, these differences are somewhat less pronounced by party identification than by ideology, with 8.8% of Democrats, 6.5% of independents and 1.7% of Republicans identifying as LGBTQIA+.

To straight, unlabeled, or cisgender students who are far removed from these issues concerning the LGBTQIA+ community, they may seem insignificant. As defined by Wikipedia, an ally, straight ally, or heterosexual ally is a “heterosexual and cisgender person who supports equal civil rights, gender equality, and LGBT social movements, challenging homophobia, biphobia, and

transphobia”. Being an ally to these individuals is one way to show support. It is everyone’s responsibility, including that of the individual, Aspen High School, and the Valley Community, to create an accepting environment for all students, especially in light of recent events.

How to support the LGBTQIA+ Community individually

Pronouns

In order to best support the LGBTQIA+ community individually, one should remember to always ask someone’s pronouns when first introduced to them, and sequentially introduce their own pronouns.

Though traditionally identified by one’s assumed gender, pronouns have become an important aspect of one’s identity. In order to show proper respect for an individual, one should ask for their identity and refer to them correctly.

Coming Out

Coming out as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community is a big step for most people. In the situation that someone comes out, express appreciation and admiration for their courage, and remember that their gender or sexuality is their secret to share, making sure never to ‘out’ anyone that is not yet out of the closet to others.

Some things to avoid when someone

comes out are reacting with “I knew it!”, making them feel guilty for not telling you sooner, or trying to force one’s own cultural or religious beliefs on them.

Danations

Furthermore, individuals can donate to nonprofits that support the LGBTQIA+ community, such as The Trevor Project, Human Rights Campaign, and Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN).

Aspen High School

Bullying

GLSEN reports that LGBTQIA+ youth who face bullying are at a significantly higher rate of becoming suicidal. By incorporating lessons on bullying, bias and diversity into their lessons, teachers can help prevent the bullying of LGBTQIA+ students.

Hate Speech

Teachers must also learn how to react to hate speech, including homophobic or transphobic statements, making sure to show students that hateful behaviour toward LGBTQIA+ individuals is unacceptable. Resources to teach tolerance and handling homophobic remarks in the classroom can be found here.

The Valley Community

Support

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The Valley community can support LGBTQIA+ businesses, protect the LGBTQIA+ community through electing LGBTQIA+ officials to represent in government, and pass protective laws against LGBTQIA+ discrimination in the workforce and beyond.

We must come together to support everyone, in order to make the Valley a safe place for all. Whether it’s organizing a Pride March, or just congratulating someone on coming out, we can all do our part to help the LGBTQIA+ community.

In the end, love is love and no one should be afraid to be their true selves. No one should ever feel targeted or discriminated against on a basis of their race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexuality, or sexual orientation. We are all human. We all love love. No hate should come of love, no matter what color of the rainbow one is. All the colors are equally beautiful, but only together can they make a rainbow.

“

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