



PHOTO: PORTLAND TRANS UNITY

PROUD & PROMINENT

Organizers of Portland's second Trans Pride March aim to bring visibility to a group whose 'acceptance is life or death'

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Last year, Portland's first large-scale trans* pride march rallied 400 trans and queer people and allies to parade the streets downtown with signs declaring "Trans Solidarity Unity Community," "Deaf Trans Pride" and "Gender is a universe and we are all stars."

This year, Portland Trans Unity, the all-volunteer group organizing the event, expects around 1,100 marchers.

Like the Portland Pride Parade, the Portland Trans Pride March is a vibrant celebration of rich and varied communities. The march celebrates the identities and experiences of trans people whose identities — including transgender, genderqueer, intersex and gender nonconforming — fall across the gender spectrum.

"When we organized the march last year, it was really exciting," said Emma Lugo, an organizer of Portland Trans March, who also helped organize last year's event. "It felt like we were doing something new. It felt like we were doing something herstoric."

A trans pride march had taken place in the past but, Lugo said, it hadn't garnered much support and didn't continue in later years. But about 2 1/2 years ago, Pride NW, the organizer of Pride marches on the West Coast, offered a group of trans activists an extension of its permit and allowed the group to continue operating independently.

This group, including Lugo, organized last year's march. After the march, the activists involved split into two camps, and one of them became Portland Trans Unity, the nonhierarchical group of 33 volunteers that is organizing the Portland Trans Pride March this year.

But the march is also about more than celebration. It's about bringing visibility to a group of people that has been persistently and violently silenced.

"The main thing that it comes down to is that trans people still don't have their rights," Lugo said. "They don't have their

rights as people in the United States and a lot of countries."

The list of barriers trans people face is long. According to the National Center for

Portland Trans Pride March

Saturday, June 13

2 p.m.: Speakers and rally at North Park Blocks.

3:30 p.m.: March to the Pride Festival at Waterfront Park

Transgender Equality, 1 in 6 trans people have been incarcerated. For black trans women, the estimate is 46 percent. In prisons they are often improperly housed according to their gender identity and, thus, in danger when incarcerated.

They are denied access to affordable and appropriate health care, especially the health care they need for their transition, putting them at risk physically, emotionally and mentally.

They experience employment and housing discrimination based on their gender identity and as a result, they experience homelessness and unemployment disproportionately. According to the National Center for Transgender Equality, 1 in 5 transgender

*Trans, or transgender, encompasses many gender identities or expressions that don't necessarily match the sex assigned at birth.