

June was a month of celebration

One thing was made clear in June. Despite being under pandemic quarantine measures for much of the past two years, the Homewood-Flossmoor community did not forget how to celebrate.

This is the first summer since 2019 with virtually no pandemic limitations in place, and people have flocked to a series

of festive occasions. The first weekend included Homewood's two-day Artisan Street Fair and Flossmoor's big one-time-only Zip Code Party, celebrating the convergence of the date, 06/04/22 with the village's zip code, 60422.

VIEWPOINT



Eric Crump
Columnist

On June 18-19 we celebrated Juneteenth, an observance born at the end of the Civil War to mark the emancipation of enslaved people. Juneteenth has long been celebrated in Black communities. Only recently has the holiday been embraced by the whole nation.

Then on June 24, people gathered at the Flossmoor Community Church Community House to celebrate the local LGBTQ+ community. The Pride Party returned to its home. FCC hosted the first two Pride Party events a few years ago. Then the villages of Flossmoor and Homewood each hosted a party before the pandemic curtailed public gatherings.

The villages were not able to host this year, so FCC stepped up. Brooke King-LaBreck, church communication and connection director, said there was a pretty clear desire to celebrate Pride. She said all the vendors, volunteers and sponsors came forward after she posted a brief announcement about the event.

"I didn't have to go looking for them," she said. "Everyone you see here tonight is here because they wanted to be a part of it. This is important to them."

James Austin and Stephanie Wright are co-directors of Lighthouse, a local organization founded to support LGBTQ+ youth. Austin estimated at least 400 people had stopped by the event. He was thrilled with the turnout.

"I'm not surprised, because the Homewood-Flossmoor community will show up for LGBTQ+ people," he said. "I'm so excited that the community showed up for us again."

Lighthouse has gone through several phases since it was founded, he said. Currently, efforts are focused on raising money for the group's scholarship fund.



Eric Crump photos/H-F Chronicle
Brooke King-LaBreck, FCC communication and connection director, smiles as hundreds gather for the Pride Party at the FCC Community House on June 24.



Cecelia McKalker, 3, helps decorate the parking lot of the FCC Community House in rainbow colors during the Pride Party on June 24. She was at the event with her mother, Cristina McKalker.

Proceeds from the party and from an event Saturday, June 25, at the Flossmoor Station Restaurant and Brewery helped the cause.

The first \$1,000 Lighthouse scholarship was awarded in May to a Homewood-Flossmoor High School senior who is a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

The fund currently has enough money to continue for at least a dozen years. Austin hopes it will be longer.

"We want that to be a big legacy project," he said.

It's not clear whether Homewood, Flossmoor or both will host a Pride event in 2023, but we can be pretty sure there will be a celebration.

"Despite the times, we remain a community of love and inclusion," King-LaBreck said. "That is the fabric of who we are here in Homewood-Flossmoor. I am so proud."

We were there because you helped

At each of the June festivals, a Chron-



James Austin, left, and Stephanie Wright manage Lighthouse, a local organization devoted to supporting LGBTQ+ youth. The organization this year awarded its first scholarship, a program it hopes to continue.

icle reporter was there (see pages 11 and 12). We also showed up, as we always do, for school board meetings, village board meetings and the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

We attended ribbon cutting ceremonies, the "Smiles Are Contagious" project that brought smiles to many in Homewood and Flossmoor during June (see page 14), an obstacle course competition (see page 29) and a benefit dance party (see page 21).

We love getting out in the community and sharing with readers the look and feel of events that bring us together and hold us together. And we love the support we get from readers to enable us to fulfill that mission.

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HOMWOOD-FLOSSMOOR CHRONICLE

About us:

The Homewood-Flossmoor Chronicle was launched in July 2014. The editors, with help from a number of community members and paid staff, are volunteering their time and talents to bring the latest news to residents of Homewood and Flossmoor.

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