

2023



*Phoenix Pride Festival*



**united**  
against hate

# PRESS / MEDIA COVERAGE SUMMARY

PREPARED BY

**JEREMY M. HELFGOT**  
J.M. HELFGOT COMMUNICATIONS

**J.M. HELFGOT**  

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**COMMUNICATIONS**



## 2023 PHOENIX PRIDE FESTIVAL & PARADE: THE HEAT WAS ON

If the 2022 Phoenix Pride Festival will be remembered for the rain, the 2023 Phoenix Pride Festival and Parade will be remembered for the heat.

Don't get me wrong; Sure, the mercury was high, with temperatures throughout the weekend pushing triple digits. But I'm not talking about the weather; I'm talking about the climate.

And I don't mean the geographic variety. I mean the climate inside and outside of this year's festivities.

Inside the confines of Steele Indian School Park, the heat was everywhere: Sizzling on stage with spicy turns from the likes of Paulina Rubio and Ashanti. Sizzling on the dance floor, packed as always with the heart of the party. Sizzling even in the air conditioned confines of the VIP Experience, where the exclusive entertainment was electric.

And the climate outside of the festival remained heated, as well. The continued raging assault against the LGBTQ+ community from policymakers in Arizona and Washington, D.C., combined with threats — and acts — of vandalism and violence against the community led to increased vigilance around this year's events. But we did not allow that to disrupt the celebration.

Instead, we answered back with some heat of our own, lighting up the stage with our state's most distinguished leaders. We were joined by Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego proclaiming it officially Pride Weekend in the City of Phoenix. We were treated to Arizona Secretary of State Adrian Fortes who presented Mayor Gallego with a cake and led the crowd in the appropriate singing, to mark the mayor's birthday the day before. And in a moment that made history (you will read about it in the following pages), for the first time ever, we welcomed a sitting Governor of Arizona to the Phoenix Pride Festival, as Gov. Katie Hobbs returned to her Phoenix Pride home to address attendees and continue her commitment to stand with the LGBTQ+ community unequivocally.

Then, on Sunday morning, we took to the streets, and filled a mile of Phoenix roadway with thousands of marchers in one of the largest Phoenix Pride Parades ever, viewed by more than 10,000 spectators along the roadside. It was a spectacle. It was a moment. It was a statement.

Throughout the weekend — as well as before and after — the Phoenix market media were ever present, telling the story of how the festival and parade come together, but more important, the people behind it, from spotlighting Phoenix Pride volunteers, to highlighting the Phoenix Pride Scholarship Program, to taking a deeper look at the culture and commerce of Drag in the Valley, the coverage of this year's events was wide and deep, and I could not be prouder of what was achieved with this year's media earned media campaign.

The following pages include just a small glimpse into the coverage we received around and during the 2023 Phoenix Pride weekend. But they reflect the stories of our incredible community and the diverse and talented individuals in it.

It remains an honor and a great pleasure to help tell that story.

Respectfully,



Jeremy M. Helfgot

**J.M. HELFGOT**  
**COMMUNICATIONS**



Oct 12, 2023

**LOCALITE: The insiders' guide to Phoenix Pride 2023**

<https://localite.cortland.com/phoenix/entertainment/phoenix-pride-guide-2023/>



Oct 16, 2023

**ARIZONA HORIZON: Phoenix Pride Festival This Weekend**

<https://azpbs.org/horizon/2023/10/celebrating-phoenix-pride/>



Oct 16, 2023

**KJZZ-FM (NPR): Phoenix Pride festival is this weekend.  
Here's where and how to celebrate**

<https://kizz.org/content/1860328/phoenix-pride-festival-weekend-heres-where-and-how-celebrate>



Oct 17, 2023

**CH. 15 NEWS (ABC): Valley drag queens talk artistry,  
acceptance and attacks (Parts I & II)**

<https://www.abc15.com/news/local-news/valley-drag-queens-talk-artistry-acceptance>



Oct 17, 2023

**CH. 12 NEWS (NBC): Your guide to Phoenix PRIDE festival  
and parade Oct. 21-22**

<https://www.12news.com/article/entertainment/events/phoenix-pride-events/75-42b05bd9-87af-42bb-bab1-7f1db9081391>



Oct 19, 2023

**ARIZONA REPUBLIC: Things To Do - Phoenix Pride Parade:  
Your Guide to the Route and Best Viewing Spots**

[Appendix, page 2]



Oct 19, 2023

**PHOENIX NEW TIMES: 'United Against Hate' – Everything  
You Need to Know About the Phoenix Pride Festival**

[Appendix, page 4]



Oct 19, 2023

**CH. 15 NEWS (ABC): Phoenix Pride Festival kicks off  
Saturday after four decades in the Valley**

<https://www.abc15.com/entertainment/events/phoenix-pride-festival-kicks-off-saturday-after-four-decades-in-the-valley>



Oct 19, 2023

**CH. 15 NEWS (ABC): Phoenix Pride scholarship program  
helps Valley students further their education**

<https://www.abc15.com/news/local-news/phoenix-pride-scholarship-program-helps-valley-students-further-their-education>



Oct 21, 2023

**TELEMUNDO AZ NOTICIAS: Miles de personas celebran el  
primer día del festival del orgullo en Phoenix [LIVE]**

<https://www.telemundoarizona.com/noticias/local/miles-de-personas-celebran-el-primer-dia-del-festival-del-orgullo-en-phoenix/2354766/>



Oct 21, 2023

**CH. 10 NEWS (FOX): 2-day Pride fest kicks off in Phoenix**

<https://www.fox10phoenix.com/video/1299503>



Oct 22, 2023

**CH. 12 NEWS (NBC): Thousands attend annual Phoenix Pride Parade**

<https://www.12news.com/article/news/local/valley/thousands-attend-annual-phoenix-pride-parade-2023/75-b8306529-735b-40ec-9a94-65711700e1a9>



Oct 22, 2023

**ARIZONA'S FAMILY CH. 3 TV NEWS: Phoenix pride has deeper meaning this year for drag queens**

<https://www.azfamily.com/2023/10/22/phoenix-pride-has-deeper-meaning-this-year-drag-queens/>



Oct 22, 2023

**AZCENTRAL.COM GALLERY: Phoenix Pride Parade 2023: Joyful celebration of community and love**

<https://www.azcentral.com/picture-gallery/entertainment/events/2023/10/22/phoenix-pride-parade-2023-photos/71232854007/>



Oct 22, 2023

**AZCENTRAL.COM GALLERY: Phoenix Pride Festival 2023: Love and laughter at Steele Indian School Park**

<https://www.azcentral.com/picture-gallery/entertainment/events/2023/10/22/phoenix-pride-festival-2023-photos/71234763007/>



Oct 22, 2023

**KTAR-FM NEWS: Phoenix Pride Festival wraps up after great acts from performers, community**

<https://ktar.com/story/5545337/phoenix-pride-festival-wraps-up-after-great-acts-from-performers-community/>



Oct 24, 2023

**ARIZONA REPUBLIC: Valley & State – Phoenix Pride Helps Community Connect**

[Appendix, page 8]



Oct 25, 2023

**CH. 15 NEWS (ABC): Boutique owner looks to make weddings more inclusive**

<https://www.abc15.com/news/local-news/boutique-owner-looks-to-make-weddings-more-inclusive>



Nov 1, 2023

**PHOENIX NEW TIMES: Photos - Phoenix Pride served LGBTQ+ fabulousness all weekend long**

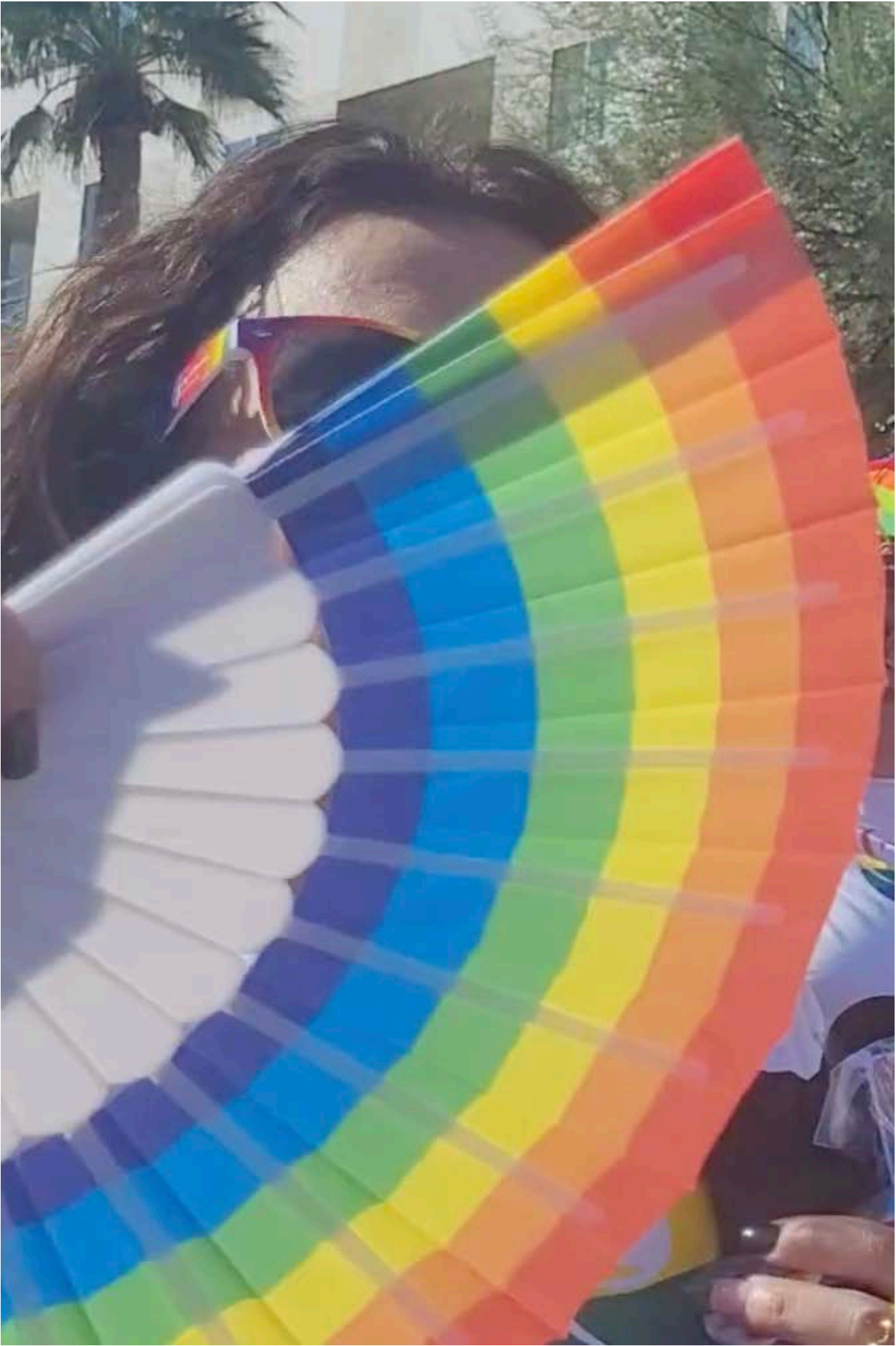
[Appendix, page 10]



Nov 2, 2023

**PHOENIX NEW TIMES: 'Loud and Clear' – Gov. Katie Hobbs becomes first Arizona governor to speak at Phoenix Pride**

[Appendix, page 21]



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# ARIZONA REPUBLIC

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2023

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USA TODAY LIFE

## THINGS TO DO



# PHOENIX PRIDE PARADE

## YOUR GUIDE TO THE ROUTE AND BEST VIEWING SPOTS

**Meredith G. White**  
Arizona Republic  
USA TODAY NETWORK

It's almost time to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community in metro Phoenix with the annual Pride parade and festival. In addition to the lively procession in the street, there will be a two-day Pride festival with live entertainment and vendors selling a variety of food and merchandise.

Pride Month takes place every June, but the Phoenix Pride festival and parade are celebrated in October so the community is able to avoid the intense summer temperatures.

The Phoenix Pride Parade celebrates the LGBTQ+ community and the progress made in Arizona over the last four decades. It will showcase floats, marchers, vehicles, artists and performance elements.

### What day is the Phoenix Pride parade?

The Phoenix Pride parade will take place on Sunday, Oct. 22.

In years past, the parade has brought more than 2,000 individual participants with decorated vehicles and colorful floats and thousands of walkers.

See **PARADE**, Page 6C



The Queer Center walks in the Phoenix Pride Parade, waving an oversized rainbow "vote" flag on Oct. 16, 2022. At top, people crowd the barricades as they watch the Phoenix Pride Parade travel down Third Street toward Steele Indian School Park. PHOTOS BY MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC



# Parade

Continued from Page 1C

## What time is the Phoenix Pride Parade?

The Phoenix Pride Parade will begin at 10 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 22.

The action takes place along Third Street from Thomas Street to Indian School and concludes at Steele Indian School Park, which is the home of the Phoenix Pride Festival.

## What is the Phoenix Pride Parade?

The Phoenix Pride Parade aims to bring the area's diverse LGBTQ+ and allied communities together for a week-end of camaraderie and celebration.

There will be thousands of participants in the parade itself and over 15,000 spectators in attendance along with the grand marshals, local luminaries, music and fun.

The Phoenix Pride Parade also raises funds for Phoenix Pride and the Pride Community Grants and Scholarships Programs.

The 2023 Phoenix Pride Parade grand marshals are:

- **Arizona Trans Youth & Parent Organization:** AZTYPO provides a safe and supportive environment for children, adolescents and their families to explore gender identity through parent support groups, financial assistance and community events.

- **Phoenix Fast-Track Cities:** The Fast-Track Cities initiative was launched on World AIDS Day in 2014 in Paris. More than 70 high-HIV-burden cities around the world have since signed the Paris Declaration on Fast-Track Cities Ending AIDS and engaged mayors and other political leaders, affected communities, city health officials, clinical and service providers and other stakeholders to accelerate their AIDS responses.

- **Positively You!** This educational media initiative from the Maricopa County Ryan White Program is designed to inform and empower young adults ages 18-34 and living with HIV to seek treatment and maintain viral suppression to help prevent HIV spread.

## Where is the Phoenix Pride festival?

For over 40 years, Phoenix Pride has organized marches, rallies, parades and more to celebrate the Phoenix LGBTQ+



Phoenix Pride's 2022 organization grand marshal, One-N-Ten, travels down Third Street with the Pride Parade on Oct. 16, 2022. One-N-Ten is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides resources and community for LGBTQ+ youth. PHOTOS BY MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC

## Phoenix Pride Parade

**When:** 10 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 22.

**Where:** The parade begins at the intersection of Thomas Road and Third Street in downtown Phoenix and moves north up Third Street to Indian School Road. Spectators are encouraged to line Third Street's east and west sides for the best views.

**Admission:** Free.

**Details:** <https://phoenixpride.org>.

community.

The two-day Pride festival features over 150 entertainment performances on multiple stages along with over 300 exhibitors showcasing a variety of food options, shopping opportunities and community resources.

The Phoenix Pride festival will take place Oct. 21-22 at Steele Indian School Park in Phoenix. For more information, including how to purchase tickets, visit <https://phoenixpride.org>.

Meredith G. White is the entertain-



People watch as the Phoenix Pride Parade travels down Third Street toward Steele Indian School Park on Oct. 16, 2022.

ment reporter for The Arizona Republic / azcentral.com . You can find her on Facebook as Meredith G. White, on Instagram and Twitter as @meredithwhite, and email her at [meredith.white@arizonarepublic.com](mailto:meredith.white@arizonarepublic.com).



## Guide to the Pride Parade

Find out everything you need to know for the 2023 Phoenix Pride Parade, including admission information, parade route and when the fun starts. **1C**

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# PHOENIX New Times

'UNITED

AGAINST,  
HATE'



Your guide to  
the Phoenix  
Pride Festival.

By Serena O'Sullivan

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**Raúl Yáñez**  
Oct 26



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**Joe Rainey**  
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**48 LIVE:**  
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▼ **Contents**

VOL. 54 | NO. 42 | OCTOBER 19-25, 2023



Photo by Matt Henrie

**Pride takes to the streets of Phoenix this weekend.**

Feature ▼

## 'United Against Hate'

Everything you need to know about Phoenix Pride.

BY SERENA O'SULLIVAN | PAGE 14

Chow ▼

## High Flying Wine

Maynard James Keenan's new hilltop winery and restaurant elevates Arizona wine.

BY TIRION BOAN | PAGE 23

<b>9</b>	<b>News</b>	
<b>14</b>	<b>Feature</b>	
<b>16</b>	<b>Culture</b>	
<b>23</b>	<b>Chow</b>	
<b>34</b>	<b>Music</b>	
	Concerts.....	38
<b>39</b>	<b>Cannabis</b>	

**On the cover:** Christopher DeBoer and Arturo Mata-Martinez.

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# 'UNITED



## AGAINST HATE'

Everything you need to know about the Phoenix Pride Festival.

BY SERENA O'SULLIVAN

**G**rab your rainbow flags, fill yourself with pride, and get ready for the Valley's biggest LGBTQ+ celebration.

The Phoenix Pride Festival will paint a kaleidoscope of floats, artists and activism in central Phoenix on Oct. 21-22. This year's organizers say the weekend's love letter to Phoenix's queer residents is sorely needed after a year of anti-LGBTQ legislation.

This year's theme, "United Against Hate," is a direct response to laws proposed earlier this year that targeted drag shows and trans folks, according to Phoenix Pride Executive Director Mike Fornelli.

"We don't want it to be an angry message," he told Phoenix New Times. "We want it to be an empowering message so that people can unite against these attacks and feel like they're supported."

Festival organizers expect 55,000

people to attend the celebration, and there will be plenty in store for partygoers.

"We have eight different stages or venues within a venue," Fornelli said. These stages will offer an array of entertainment and 20 local food vendors will be dishing up lip-smacking grub. Plus, hundreds of local businesses and organizations will be exhibiting their products and services in the health and wellness pavilion.

Funds raised through the festival will support various Phoenix Pride Community Foundation programs, which give grants to nonprofits that create new resources and programs for LGBTQ+ people.

"The Community Foundation also has a scholarship fund for LGBTQ and allied students to continue their education," Fornelli said. "So the proceeds from the festival feed into both of these programs. We're almost at \$1.4 million that we've given back to the community through

these grants and scholarships."

Pride is a family-friendly, inclusive event that welcomes everyone, whether they're out and proud, allies or simply folks who want to meet their queer neighbors.

### When and where is the Phoenix Pride Festival?

The 2023 Phoenix Pride Festival takes place at Steele Indian School Park, located at 300 E. Indian School Road. It is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 21-22, from noon-9 p.m.

### How to get to the festival

There's one entrance into the festival, and it's easy to miss. If you're driving east on Indian School Road, make a left onto South Herrera Way — or make a right if you're heading west — and continue until you reach the end. Can't see any rainbows? You may have missed it.

### Where to park

Traffic can quickly become congested around the area. If you can't snag one of the free spots in the park's lot, try the nearby 4041 Central Plaza Garage, which has about 1,400 spots for \$12 each. (You can only pay by card, though.)

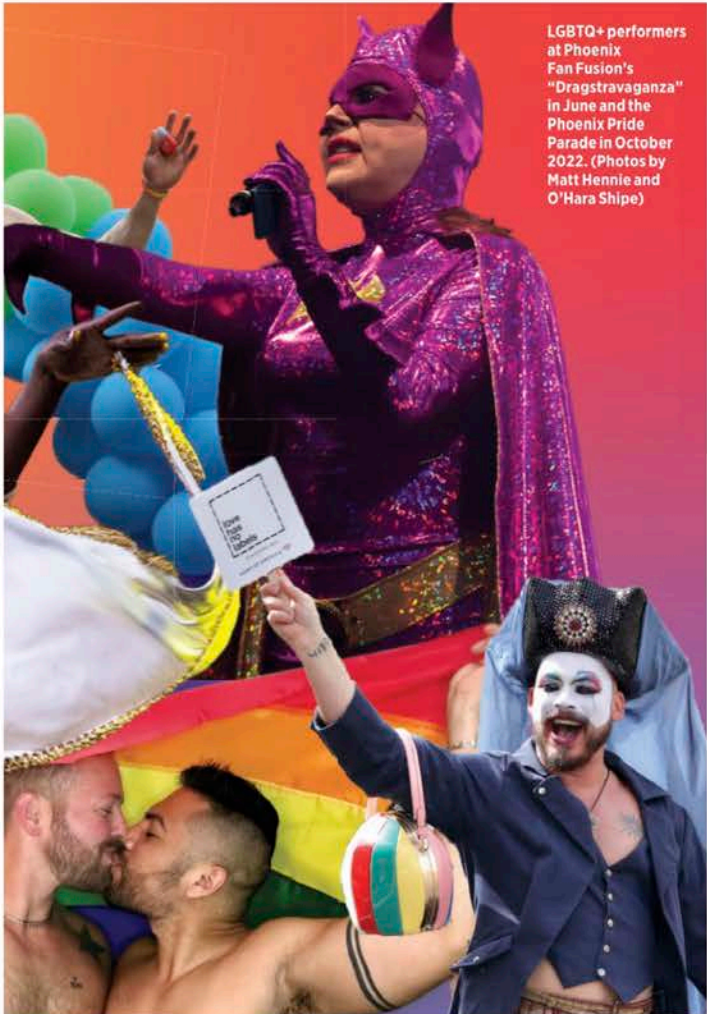
There's also the Central High School parking lot, which is a short walk from the park and has 200 spaces for \$10 each.

Feeling cheap? Try the Ampco System Parking Lots located at 4000 N. Central Ave. to snag one of 800 spaces.

Or, you can avoid parking woes by using ride-sharing options or the Valley Metro light rail. A dedicated pickup and drop-off area is available for those using apps such as Uber or Lyft.

### How much does it cost?

General admission for a day is \$34; express entry is available for \$40.



LGBTQ+ performers at Phoenix Fan Fusion's "Dragstravaganza" in June and the Phoenix Pride Parade in October 2022. (Photos by Matt Hennie and O'Hara Shlpe)

VIP ticket holders also get exclusive entertainment from Wild on Saturday from 2-4 p.m.

Then, on Sunday, Lopez will throw a VIP-only show from 2-4 p.m.

Kadee Christian Starr will host both VIP shows.

Aside from the main stage and Latin stage, there are six other venues to explore:

- Community stage, which showcases local entertainment performances
- Local stage, which is specifically for Phoenix-based performers
- KidSpace, where youths younger than 18 can party with their friends and families
- Arts Expo, a show for music and art lovers
- Dance pavilions, where DJs spin records
- Erotic World, a venue for attendees ages 18 and older that includes fetish demonstrations, toys and exotic dancers

"I don't know a lot of festivals that have that many venues for entertainment," Fornelli said.

Bottom line: There's something for everyone.

### What to eat and drink

Twenty local food vendors and the eight beverage stations — one for each venue — will be on-site at the Phoenix Pride Festival, providing plenty of bites and sips.

"We also offer nonalcoholic drinks or mocktails for people who don't want to drink or aren't old enough to drink, because (the event) is for all ages," Fornelli said.

He added that attendees will be able to sample a diverse selection of foods. Expect everything from deep-fried treats to pizza, burgers and a whole lot more.

Food offerings also will be available for folks with dietary restrictions, Fornelli said.

### No cannabis allowed

Although it's legal to smoke cannabis in Arizona, it's not allowed at the festival because the venue is a Phoenix city park. If you plan to smoke a joint and relax for the festivities, make sure to do it before the event — and use a designated driver.

### Accessibility upgrades

Is all the partying a little too loud for you? A quiet area will be located near the lake for those who become overwhelmed by all the stimuli. Fenced off from the rest of the

festival grounds, it will be identified with the neurodiversity infinity symbol.

This is the second year Phoenix Pride has added a quiet zone to the festival. The organizers decided to keep it following positive feedback from last year's event, Fornelli said.

"We aim to be as accessible as possible as a festival, so we wanted to be able to cater to the neurodiverse community and 55 and older folks," he told New Times. The quiet area will feature white noise and other relaxing features designed for people who need a break from sensory overload.

"We've also made sure that we have ASL interpreters for our front stages for the hard of hearing community, along with mobility shuttles for folks who aren't able to get around on their own," Fornelli said.

### Why is the Pride Festival in October and not June?

This marks the second consecutive year that event organizers will transform Phoenix into a rainbow-studded extravaganza in October. Most U.S. cities celebrate Pride in June to commemorate the Stonewall Riots, which took place in New York City on June 28, 1969.

In Phoenix, Pride events started more than 40 years ago.

"We started in 1981 as like a march, like a rally, and it's grown into the festival," Fornelli said.

According to Phoenix Pride's digital timeline, the first official Phoenix Pride Parade was thrown in 1997. Back then, leaders strategically scheduled the event for April in order to avoid the brutal summer temperatures.

For 24 years, the Phoenix Pride Festival graced the city streets with vibrant celebrations in April. However, the COVID-19 pandemic threw a wrench into the organization's best-laid plans.

"When COVID hit, we were out of commission for about a year and a half," Fornelli said. "The earliest we were able to hold an in-person event of our size was at the end of October."

Since it didn't make sense to turn around and hold Pride again just five months later in April, the organization decided to permanently move the annual event to October.



(Photo by Matt Hennie)

Admission is free for children ages 12 and younger and active military members; while kids ages 13-17, former military and folks ages 55 and older can get in for \$15 if they show their ID at the on-site box office at the admissions entrance.

Want the VIP experience? One-day VIP admission is \$108; two days is \$161. VIPs must be 18 years and older.

This upgrade includes exclusive entertainment, a spot in front of the main stage, a buffet, two complimentary drinks per day and access to an air-conditioned space.

Want to join the official after-party on Saturday night? The celebratory bash takes place from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. at Walter Studios, located at 747 W. Roosevelt St. General admission is \$50 with a VIP upgrade an additional \$13.

Tickets can be bought online or at the gate. Credit cards will be accepted for admissions and beverage sales. ATMs also will be available throughout the park.

### What about the Phoenix Pride Parade?

The Pride Parade kicks off on Sunday, Oct.

22 at 10 a.m. at Thomas Road and Third Street in downtown Phoenix. The rainbow of brightly colored floats and more than 2,000 individual participants will travel northbound along Third Street before ending at Steele Indian School Park near Indian School Road and Third Street.

Event organizers expect more than 15,000 spectators to enjoy the visual feast.

### What concerts are at the Pride festival?

You can groove to live performances on both the main stage and the Latin stage. Here's when and where the featured performances are:

#### Main stage

- Saturday: Zee Machine at 7 p.m.; Paulina Rubio at 8 p.m.
- Sunday: Niki Harris & Donna De Lory at 7 p.m.; Ashanti at 8 p.m.

#### Latin stage

- Saturday: Host Jessica Wild from 5-7 p.m.; Mar Solis, Jessica Esoterica
- Sunday: Host Naysha Lopez from 5-7 p.m.; Mariana Seoane at 6 p.m.; Mar Solis, Jessica Esoterica

# ARIZONA REPUBLIC

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**Parade caps off Phoenix Pride**  
Estimated 3,000 participate in parade, while tens of thousands attend weekend festival at Steele-Indian School Park. 3A

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Estimated 3,000 participate in parade, while tens of thousands attend weekend festival at Steele-Indian School Park. 3A

**Parade caps off Phoenix Pride**  
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### Israel, Hamas war Hamas frees two additional hostages

US urges delay of likely Gaza ground offensive

John Rasmussen and Greg S. Orloff

Israel released two more hostages on Sunday, bringing the total to 26. The hostages were freed in a deal struck between Israel and Hamas. The deal was part of a larger agreement that also included a ceasefire and the release of Palestinian prisoners. The deal was announced by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The hostages were freed in a deal struck between Israel and Hamas. The deal was part of a larger agreement that also included a ceasefire and the release of Palestinian prisoners. The deal was announced by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

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The 2023 Phoenix Pride Parade takes place on Third Street in downtown Phoenix on Sunday morning. MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC

# Phoenix Pride helps community connect

### Welcoming atmosphere at parade, 2-day festival

**Audrey Eagerton**  
Arizona Republic  
USA TODAY NETWORK

For Christine Snyder, Phoenix Pride's annual festival is about community and coming together as a family.

Sunday's celebration began at 10 a.m. with a parade starting on Third Street and Thomas Road, making its way north to Steele-Indian School Park, where the festival opened at noon.

Before the festival began, Snyder stood in front of a group protesting the parade near the park entrance on Third Street and Indian School Road, shouting her own beliefs and welcoming other parade-goers.

Snyder moved to Phoenix two years ago from Chicago and wanted to remain involved in the LGBTQ+ community to support her family and everyone out at the event.

"Pride is very big there [in Chicago] and I wanted to be a part of it in Phoenix. Here it seems to have more of a family



Ricardo Camacho at the Phoenix Pride Festival at Steele-Indian School Park on Sunday. NICOLE MULLEN/THE REPUBLIC

kind of atmosphere ... it feels more intimate and I'm proud to be celebrating with likeminded people that accept everyone," Snyder said.

While it might feel more intimate, the

parade had around 3,000 participants with hundreds of entrance floats and vehicles, according to Jeremy Helfgot,

See PRIDE, Page 10A



Attendees at the Phoenix Pride Festival on Sunday; over the weekend, it was expected to attract 50,000 people. NICOLE MULLEN/THE REPUBLIC

## Pride

Continued from Page 3A

who runs communications on behalf of Phoenix Pride.

Throughout the weekend, 50,000 people were expected in total at the Phoenix Pride festival, but that family atmosphere is still alive, said Helfgot.

“Phoenix is an interesting place because the Valley is so spread out and there isn’t really a gay neighborhood per se, not like in other places,” Helfgot said.

Helfgot acknowledged the smaller pockets of LGBTQ-inclusive areas in Phoenix, such as the Melrose District, which spans Seventh Avenue from Indian School Road to Camelback Road in Central Phoenix, and is known for its high concentration of LGBTQ nightlife within a 1-mile stretch.

“Because there isn’t a geographic space, the connection in the metaphysical sense becomes even stronger ... community isn’t tied to one place, it’s something bigger than that. That’s why, when compared to other cities — Phoenix has a different feeling.”

Within the festival gates, performers took the stage and several local businesses set up booths throughout the park.

One of those booths was occupied by Drag Story Hour Arizona, a nonprofit organization that focuses on diversity and inclusivity in early literacy throughout Arizona. Michelle Miranda-Thorstand, also known as Ms. Michelle when she’s performing, is the executive director of the organization.

During a drag story hour performance, she mentioned the way kids’

eyes will light up at the sparkly costumes or how, for the first time, they’ll see someone who reflects themselves or their family.

“A lot of our young readers might not be your typical heteronormative child, they might have parents who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, they might have different gender expression, so when they see our story tellers and see that it’s not just the ridged binary—they get really excited,” Miranda-Thorstand said.

Drag Story Hour Arizona focuses on drag art and performances that are suitable for all ages, and they take care to have all of their performers do background checks. Their primary goal is to make sure that young readers are engaged in literacy and that they can imagine a world where they can be their authentic selves.

Among the booths and exhibits, other members of the community continued to raise their signs from the parade. One of the signs held by Christine Severance read: “If your parents don’t accept you, I’m your new mom.”

Severance came out to support her daughter who has participated in one n ten, an organization that serves LGBTQ youth throughout Arizona, and their walk in the parade.

“I get a lot off attention holding this at pride parades because a lot of people get left out in the cold by their families. It breaks my heart and I am happy to provide support for anybody in the queer community,” Severance said.

“The community in Phoenix is definitely widespread, but that’s why I love coming to events like this, because it’s like this pocket or bubble of acceptance and equality.”

LGBTQ+

## Photos: Phoenix Pride served LGBTQ+ fabulousness all weekend long

The people – attendees, artists and entertainers – slayed the annual Pride festival in Steele Indian School Park.

By Jacob Tyler Dunn | November 1, 2023



Sarah Perleberg, Savannah Banana and Raven Prouty explored the festival grounds of Phoenix Pride and posed with their favorite fans.  
Jacob Tyler Dunn

Rainbow revelry took over Steele Indian School Park last month as Phoenix Pride delivered a weekend of floats, artists, vendors and activism.

The annual event, held Oct. 21-22, also made some history this year: Gov. Katie Hobbs **reiterated her support for LGBTQ+ issues** from the main stage and became the first Arizona governor to appear at Phoenix Pride. Arizona Secretary of State Adrian Fontes and Mayor Kate Gallego also celebrated with festival attendees.

But it's the people that make this festival. Seven stages of entertainment and dozens of exhibitors – nevermind an hours-long parade – just added to the Pride vibes throughout the weekend.





4Some Revue, a popular drag show on Fridays at Kobalt Bar, put on an amazing performance during Pride on Oct. 21.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



It's all about the outfit at Phoenix Pride.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



Longtime Phoenix Pride attendees Josh, Justin, Derek, Jules and Dylan partied into the nighttime.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



The Bistro Stage offered a pleasant escape from the usual Pride festivities and offered bands and artists with a variety of musical styles.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



Jessica, Jacob and Declan Lavelle enjoying a lovely Sunday afternoon on Oct. 22 at Phoenix Pride.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



Strolling through the vendor village, Jay and DJ Matthews shopped the booths.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



Majik, a residency of Stacy's at Melrose, closing out their epic performance on the main stage on Oct. 22.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



Sam and Cassie got engaged in a beautiful moment at Phoenix Pride.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



Pride-goers taking a breather from walking through the festivities at Steele Indian School Park.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



It can't be a festival without street fair food and like always there was all the classics you would want.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



Steve and Micaela Simon of Be Well Family Care had a busy booth all weekend offering information along with cool custom merch.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



Friends Anna Marie Ricci, Angelica Hernandez, Anja trncic and Matthew Fernandez having a blast at the festival.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



Local artist Ashley Macis created this art for the festival and raised money for her non-profit Trans Queer Pueblo.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



Kade Brown, Syd Rakos and SammiesGroovyGear hanging out around the festival and checking out vendors.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



Crowds at Phoenix Pride lasted well into the nights on Oct. 21-22.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



Mx Phoenix Pride 2023 Sassy D DeMornay celebrated with friends Alexandria Roberts and Makayla Weathers.

Jacob Tyler Dunn





The main stage crowd grew as the night progressed and the performances heated up on Oct. 21.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



The Latin Stage never fails to deliver all the hunky dancers you want to see during Phoenix Pride.

Jacob Tyler Dunn



The infamous Kalliope Dance Stage by Walter Studios was full of music all weekend long.

Jacob Tyler Dunn

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# 'Loud and Clear'

Gov. Katie Hobbs becomes first Arizona governor to speak at Phoenix Pride.

BY MATT HENNIE

**G**ov. Katie Hobbs celebrated Pride on Oct. 21 with thousands of people in Steele Indian School Park, becoming the first governor in Arizona history to appear at the LGBTQ+ festival.

It also marked a homecoming of sorts for the former social worker and Democratic state lawmaker. Hobbs, while minority leader in the Arizona State Senate, worked as the community outreach and support services manager for Phoenix Pride, the nonprofit that organizes the two-day festival.

"It's been a long time since you've had an ally to the LGBTQ+ community in the state's highest office," Hobbs told the crowd. "So let me say this loudly, clearly, unequivocally: With me as your governor, you don't just have an ally, you have a champion."

During the legislative session earlier this year, Hobbs served as a bulkhead against Republicans trying to criminalize drag queens, ostracize transgender people and target LGBTQ+ issues. At least five anti-LGBTQ+ bills were among the record 142 vetoes Hobbs issued this year.

Hobbs said that her work with Phoenix Pride — along with volunteering at One•N•Ten, which supports LGBTQ+ youth — helped empower her as the state's first Democratic governor since 2009.

"I carry these experiences with me every single day, and they are front of mind whenever out of touch, hate-filled politicians try to come for your rights. I didn't become governor to break veto records, but I was proud to stand strong against hateful legislation that sadly made it to my desk this past legislative session," Hobbs told the crowd.

The governor also mocked the efforts of Republican lawmakers who are trying to ban drag shows in the state.

"These failed attempts to out trans and nonbinary youth, endanger the lives of every LGBTQ+ individual and suppress freedom of expression by banning drag shows tell me two things: One, these people don't know how to have any fun. And two, they are very unserious about addressing the real issues that face Arizona," Hobbs said.

Hobbs also pointed to proactive measures she's backed, despite a Republican-controlled legislature. Since taking office, Hobbs has signed three executive orders concerning LGBTQ+ issues.

On Jan. 2, her first day in office, Hobbs signed an order protecting LGBTQ+ employees at state agencies and companies with state contracts. On June 27, as many cities in the U.S. celebrated Pride, Hobbs signed two executive orders: 2023-12 affirms access to state employees for gender-affirming health care, and 2023-13 bans state agencies from promoting the use of conversion therapy, which is a medically debunked effort to change a person's sexual orientation.

In early June, she draped four Pride flags around the Executive Tower.

"I will continue to make sure that our LGBTQ+ public servants are able to live their lives as their true selves. And I will also continue to use my platform to make it clear that Arizona is a place where all should feel welcome," Hobbs said.

### Gallego: 'Still work to be done' on LGBTQ+ issues

The governor's appearance came a few hours after two other high-profile Arizona Democrats spoke at the event. Arizona Secretary of State Adrian Fontes sang



happy birthday to Mayor Kate Gallego. The mayor also welcomed festivalgoers and shared a city proclamation declaring the weekend "Phoenix Pride Festival Days."

"There is still work to be done to safeguard LGBTQ+ rights so that marginalized communities can continue to thrive in Phoenix. We must work together to build a future that is safe for everyone," the proclamation read.

Hobbs urged attendees to enjoy the weekend celebration before taking a selfie from the stage with the crowd behind her.

"I am looking forward to continuing to work with all of you to build an Arizona for everyone, an Arizona where everyone — no matter who you love or who you are — has the safety, freedom and opportunity to truly live your authentic lives," Hobbs said.

Hobbs and Phoenix Pride officials confirmed that she's the first sitting Arizona governor to address the festival. LGBTQ+ activists held the city's first Pride march in 1981. A decade later, in 1991, a group of volunteers organized the annual Pride festival and started the organization that later became the nonprofit host of the event, according to Phoenix Pride.

In October 2022, Gallego was joined by Hobbs and Fontes — both candidates at the time — in the Phoenix Pride parade.



Gov. Katie Hobbs became the first Arizona governor to speak at the Phoenix Pride Festival when she appeared at the event on Oct. 21. She ended her remarks by taking a selfie with the crowd. (Photos by Matt Hennie)

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