

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:00:06 Speaker 1

Our guest today is Tracy LeBlanc, Chief Community Engagement Officer of Western New York Independent Living, and I'm your host, Ernie Churchwell.

00:00:14 Speaker 1

Welcome to the program, Tracy.

00:00:17 Speaker 2

Thank you, Ernie.

00:00:18 Speaker 1

Our pleasure to have you.

00:00:20 Speaker 1

You're here because you've got the details, at least as far as they've been developed,

00:00:26 Speaker 1

on our biggest occasion of the year, the Disability Pride Festival.

00:00:31 Speaker 1

For those who aren't familiar, can you tell us what big event the Disability Pride Festival celebrates and what it calls for?

00:00:41 Speaker 2

Yeah, the Disability Pride Festival is a celebration of the anniversary of the Americans with Disability Act, or the ADA, which was signed on July 26th, 1990.

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The Disability Pride Festival is organized by Western New York Independent Living and more than 40 organizations in our community.

00:01:02 Speaker 2

The committee works all year to plan and organize the festival to make sure it's entertaining and accessible to all.

00:01:09 Speaker 2

The Disability Pride Festival promotes the awareness, celebrates the individuality, and champions the rights of people with disabilities, fostering community pride and inclusivity.

00:01:22 Speaker 2

Celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion, the Disability Pride Festival welcomes people of all abilities and cultures to experience community pride and empowerment.

00:01:33 Speaker 2

Last year, more than 800 people attended, enjoying entertainment on our main stage, the ADA speaker series, a children's area, unity walk, and a resource fair with more than 70 participating organizations.

00:01:51 Speaker 1

And this isn't even happening until July, but it sounds like you already have a lot of elements in place.

00:01:57 Speaker 2

Yes, we do.

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We have a lot of exciting things in the works for 2026.

00:02:03 Speaker 2

This year's theme is the *Art of Accessibility*.

00:02:06 Speaker 2

It will once again be held at Buffalo River Works, and we will be expanding the festival to take over not only the stage area, but both rinks.

00:02:15 Speaker 2

We're looking to add an artist alley, a marketplace, and expand our main stage entertainment and ADA speaker series.

00:02:23 Speaker 2

We'll also be looking to add more demonstrations and activities to round out the day.

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The Unity Walk will be bigger and better this year, and we invite everyone to participate.

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People can also enjoy all the attractions at Riverworks, including the accessible Ferris wheel, arcade, and other rides.

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It's a free family event that

00:02:45 Speaker 2

anyone can enjoy.

00:02:47 Speaker 1

Well, it sounds like even this far in advance that you already have an awful lot of things planned.

00:02:55 Speaker 1

And it sounds like you managed to cleverly put in a place that had some built-in attractions right in there.

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Is there anything else that people should know about the Disability Pride Festival?

00:03:11 Speaker 2

Yeah, this year the Disability Pride Festival will be held on Friday, July 24th from 2 to 7 p.m.

00:03:18 Speaker 2

at Buffalo RiverWorks on Ganson Street.

00:03:22 Speaker 2

We'll be, you know, it'll be a nice day.

00:03:25 Speaker 2

It's all covered, so it's weatherproof, and it's open to anyone who wants to come.

00:03:31 Speaker 2

It's free.

00:03:31 Speaker 2

Everything is free, and we welcome people of all abilities.

00:03:37 Speaker 1

Wow.

00:03:37 Speaker 1

I'm sure that a lot of details are yet to be put in place.

00:03:42 Speaker 1

But even this far in advance, people will probably have some questions on it.

00:03:49 Speaker 1

Is there a centralized place where they can get information?

00:03:54 Speaker 2

Yeah, we have a website, disabilitypridefestivalwny.org

00:04:00 Speaker 2

And we also have a Facebook page where you can get the latest updates and sign up to receive more information.

00:04:09 Speaker 1

All right.

00:04:10 Speaker 1

And do you have a URL for that page?

00:04:14 Speaker 2

Disability Pride Buffalo.

00:04:17 Speaker 1

All righty.

00:04:19 Speaker 1

Well, it sounds like you've already laid out the path for people to follow.

00:04:27 Speaker 1

Is there a phone number they should know?

00:04:30 Speaker 2

Yeah, you can call 716-836-0822, extension 166 if you have any questions or you want to participate.

00:04:39 Speaker 1

Thanks so much for being with us, Tracy.

00:04:42 Speaker 2

Thank you for having me, Ernie.

00:04:44 Speaker 1

You've been listening to Independent Perspective,

00:04:47 Speaker 1

a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:04:50 Speaker 1

Our guest today has been Tracy LeBlanc, Chief Community Engagement Officer of Western New York Independent Living.

00:04:57 Speaker 1

And I've been your host, Ernie Churchwell.