

Independent Perspective #1909 with Holly Nidell on Disability Pride Festival Activities

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

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

00:00:05 Speaker 1

I'm your host, Tracy LeBlanc, Chief Community Engagement Officer at Western New York Independent Living.

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The 2026 Disability Pride Festival is taking place on Friday, July 24th at Buffalo River Works from 2 to 7 p.m.

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It will be a day filled with activities for all ages and abilities.

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Joining us today to provide us with the details on the day's activities is Holly Nidell, one of the event's planning

00:00:30 Speaker 1

committee members.

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Welcome to the program, Holly.

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Well, hi, Tracy.

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Thank you for having me.

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Holly, the planning committee has worked hard to ensure there is something for everyone.

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Can you tell us about some of the activities that are planned for this year's festival?

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Where do I begin?

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Because this year's festival is truly something special, we've built something for everyone, and I sincerely mean that.

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From our youngest attendees and

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families.

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We have incredible children's area that's going to be filled with energy and imagination.

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We have confirmed balloon artists and we are thrilled to have organizations like EPIC, Parent Network, Mental Health Advocates,

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and Explore and More, all present and engaging with families and in meaningful ways too.

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One of the features that I'm excited about is our Speaker Series.

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This year we have lightning rounds, which means that our speakers will be giving focused, high-energy presentations that is meant to keep the audience engaged and inspired.

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We also have what is called a mock Meet the Candidate session, which directly speaks to our mission statement and the mission of champion rights.

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We'll even have an accessible voting machine that'll be set up so people can become familiar and can be comfortable with the voting process

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in a welcoming and supportive environment like Disability Pride.

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And for those who need a moment of peace and calm amidst the excitement that's going to take place for Disability Pride Festival, we're really, really proud to offer a sensory room, which we lovingly call the Calm Cove.

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This is a sponsored space

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that ensures people who may be experiencing sensory sensitivities have a safe, quiet retreat that is available to them throughout the course of the day.

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The festival also has a new feature this year focused on art.

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What can you tell us about that?

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We have something truly extraordinary also happening this year.

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We have welcomed artists from multiple states and intentionally including artists from Canada.

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The creativity and the diversity of voices being represented in that space is going to be breathtaking.

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We also are proud to share all the vendors that we're going to have at this year's festival from all across Western New York.

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These are local businesses and organizations who believe in what we are building and want to be a part of it.

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And then there's the moment I think many of us will carry in our hearts after a long day when it's almost over is our Unity Walk.

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But participants will have an opportunity

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to create their own flags in the Artist Alley to carry on the walk, which means every person there will be contributing to their own color, to their own identity, into something larger than themselves.

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And that is Disability Pride in its purest form.

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Let's talk logistics.

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One of the features of the event is a shuttle service to the festival, can you tell us more about this?

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Accessibility, as we know, isn't just a value that we talk about.

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It's also something that we're committed to this year.

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A shuttle service is going to be provided again by Cedar Bus.

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Rides will depart from the NFTA downtown to Riverworks beginning at 1:30 PM and it will be in 30-minute rotations.

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So, Cedar Bus will run continuous service between the downtown, our downtown location and our venue at Riverworks.

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And the last pickup from Riverworks back to the NFTA will be at 7 p.m.

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That's all the time we have for this week.

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As a reminder, this year's Disability Pride Festival is taking place on Friday, July 24th at Buffalo River Works.

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You can find all the details at disabilitypridewny.org.

00:05:01 Speaker 1

You've been listening to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:05:07 Speaker 1

Our guest today was Disability Pride Festival Committee

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member Holly Nidell and I have been your host Tracy LeBlanc.