

Independent Perspective #1908 with Holly Nidell on the Significance of the Disability Pride Festival

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

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

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

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The annual Disability Pride Festival is a collaboration of multiple community organizations to celebrate the anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 26th, 1990.

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This year's festival is scheduled for Friday, July 24th at Buffalo River Works.

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Joining us today to tell us about the significance of the Disability Pride Festival is Holly Nidell, one of the event's planning 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, this event celebrates the signing of the ADA.

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Why is it important to recognize the signing of the ADA?

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You know, when I think about the theme we have chosen for this year's Disability Pride Festival, the *Art of Access*,

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I think of the most powerful and perfectly chosen themes we've ever had because access to access is indeed an art form.

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It is not simply about our ramps or our doorways or parking spaces.

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Access is about things that matter enormously.

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Access is about intentional, creative, and deeply human work, ensuring that every single person has the opportunity to fully participate in the beauty of life.

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And that's exactly what the Americans with Disabilities Act set out to do when it was signed into law in 1990.

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The ADA in its own right ...

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a masterpiece.

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It was crafted by advocates, shaped by struggles, colored by lived experience of millions of people with disabilities who had been told for far too long that the world wasn't made for them.

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And it took vision, it took courage, it took artistry of the highest order.

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The art of meaning and imagination

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of a more just and inclusive world and having the audacity to build it.

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That is what the ADA means to me.

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The festival here in Western New York, started initially as a picnic hosted by

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WNYIL, has grown throughout the years to become a large festival.

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That growth prompted the committee to develop both mission and vision statements for the festival.

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Can you tell us what the mission of the festival is and why it's important?

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Yes, that's a great question.

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So, as Western New York Independent Living had rooted the simple but powerful idea that people with disabilities deserve a space

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to gather and to be seen and to be celebrated.

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Over the years, our committee has grown and expanded.

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And in doing so, we felt that a mission statement would be very profound.

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And the mission statement that a collective of the committee had come up with with intentional thought and idea

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

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Is there anything else you feel is important to our listeners to know?

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I do.

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First and foremost, I want to thank in advance everyone that will be attending our festival.

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And I want every single person who is listening right now to really hear what we're saying.

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You are welcome.

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You're very welcome to be a part of the Disability Pride Festival of Buffalo.

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Whether you have a disability or love someone who does, whether you're just an ally learning or an advocate

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who has been in the fight for decades.

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This festival is for you.

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And the Disability Pride Festival is not just an event on a calendar and we really want people to know that.

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It's a declaration.

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It's for our community standing together and saying that we're proud of who we are and we're proud of how far we've come.

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

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

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Holly will be back on the show next week to provide us with a sneak peek of what is taking place during this year's festival.

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

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Our guest today was Disability Pride Festival committee member Holly Nidell, and I have been your host, Tracy LeBlanc.