



***The North Idaho Pride Alliance  
Board of Directors and Staff***

June 21, 2022,

**SUBJECT: North Idaho Pride Alliance responds to activities surrounding and leading up to Pride in the Park in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.**

Dear stakeholders and members of the public,

Beginning in April 2022, the North Idaho Pride Alliance endured a highly organized hate and disinformation campaign against our small community nonprofit, to intimidate and disrupt our community, and the 6th annual Pride in the Park celebration in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

With key partners, we made law enforcement agencies aware of information of concern. We continue to take preventative actions to support public safety during this period of experiencing unprecedented hate.

We assert that our community is under the attack of a multi-media hate and disinformation campaign. This specific plan to disrupt our Pride event and create a national media sensation rapidly spread to involve multiple interconnected groups and bad actors on the local, statewide and national levels, including but not limited to aligned media provocateurs, local political organizers, and even a few Idaho elected officials, lobbyist groups and churches.

The arrest of 31 members of the white supremacist group Patriot Front, with intentions to riot at Pride in the Park and downtown Coeur d'Alene has been widely reported, with new information still coming to light about why this occurred. We hope the public may learn more from our experience and the complex circumstances we navigated to ensure a safe and enjoyable celebration for all who chose to participate.

Pride in the Park successfully took place as scheduled on Saturday, June 11, 2022, from 10 AM - 3 PM PT, with the largest attendance ever experienced for a Pride celebration in Kootenai County, Idaho. Our family-friendly event was attended by people of all ages, including many locals who never attended a Pride celebration prior.

The 2022 theme of Pride in the Park and our CDA4Pride campaign is "Exist Louder". Our campaign included a series of in-person events, activities, and educational opportunities for all ages to raise awareness and build community. NIPA's Board of Directors and sole staff member organized events, in collaboration with over two hundred volunteers and regional partners.

Leading up to the event, vendors, partners, and supporters of Pride in the Park experienced an onslaught of harassing calls, emails, social media messages, and other online activities in attempts to pressure event cancellation and intimidate supporters. Hate flyers misrepresenting events, individuals, and partnering organizations with threatening language circulated by mail, in Kootenai County locations, and freely spread on social media platforms. Parts of the public remain duped by disinformation by media content and the misreporting by specific news organizations.

At the Pride in the Park event, protestors, often displaying weapons and hateful signage, continuously attempted to provoke and intimidate eventgoers. However, they were unsuccessful in disrupting the 1st Amendment rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression of attendees for several reasons.

- 1) North Idaho Pride Alliance adopted and implemented a “do not engage” policy, encouraging the public NOT to engage with protestors they may encounter outside events or online. We advised members of the public to report to specific agencies if they saw concerning content or incidents. We communicated this in advance multiple times through published statements in the local press and on our media platforms.
- 2) North Idaho Pride Alliance formed a Safety Committee that included our volunteer representatives and staff, guidance, and resources from partnering organizations, an internal online monitoring and documentation system, careful event layout design, and continued communication to law enforcement. We formed a day-of safety team whose plan was to observe, deescalate and communicate anything of concern at the event.
- 3) Law enforcement was visibly present throughout downtown Coeur d’Alene and at our event on June 11th. All law enforcement agencies involved responded appropriately and professionally throughout the day to protect the constitutional rights of all people and the safety of the greater Coeur d’Alene community. We are deeply grateful to these law enforcement agencies, and for the community member who observed the Patriot Front members loading into a U-Haul and reported it. This fact illustrates the powerful role one individual can have in keeping their community safe.
- 4) Pride in the Park attendees, the majority coming from North Idaho communities, chose to stand with us in love, kindness, and inclusion. The tremendous joy and support expressed at Coeur d’Alene City Park that day served as an essential safety shield.

Nationally, in the last year, we have seen a massive uptick of hate, disinformation, and legislation targeting the very existence of queer people, their families, and all who love and support them. Our lived experience and other hate incidents reported elsewhere at Pride events painfully illustrate the danger of dehumanizing rhetoric and concentrated targeting of LGBTQIA+ people for political gain.

The disinformation and hateful rhetoric used to target us are ongoing, and we remain vigilant. We are committed to the safety of our volunteers, partners, and other individuals associated with our organization. That is our number one priority.

If we look beyond the sensational optics and dark surroundings, our story is a testament to the human spirit to exist louder, love harder, build community, and rise above.

We will continue to celebrate and grow with the guidance of our grassroots organization’s motto, “Live. Love. Be United!”

**With Pride,**

**The North Idaho Pride Alliance Board of Directors and Staff**

*North Idaho Pride Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. They are a grassroots volunteer organization of LGBTQIA+ people, allies, and community groups working together to create a more inclusive North Idaho.*