



Marching in the Chicago Pride Parade last June as part of BHCBE's first ever delegation to this event was one of my favorite days of the entire programming year! Coming just weeks after the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, the walk afforded many of us the opportunity to actually *do something* about the difficult state of our world and speak out for our values in a tangible way. Many of us felt motivated to take part in the march out of love for a particular LGBTQ individual (or individuals) in our lives while others were inspired by a broader sense of commitment to civil rights and social justice. For me, personally, it felt important to proclaim publicly that Jews care about inclusion given our community's unfortunate history of unwelcome on these issues and the pervasive influence of the religious right who can give the mistaken impression that they speak for all peoples of faith.

What I had not quite expected was how incredibly joyful, inspiring, and just plain fun it would be to take part in the Parade. The energy of the crowd and the uplift of hearing them cheer upon seeing a Jewish group represented. The simultaneous unity and diversity of our incredible city, individuals of all ages and races and socio-economic backgrounds and nationalities coming together to celebrate love in its many different forms. The spectacular sights and sounds, floats and costumes; the birds-eye view of the neighborhoods through which we walked; the sense of being part of something much larger than ourselves. The day was a testament to the power of personal expression, the good that flows into the world when all people can feel free to be their unique and authentic selves without shame or judgment.

This year the Pride Parade is being held on Sunday, June 25th and the Jewish community of greater Chicago has been encouraged to all walk together as one delegation, amplifying our message through greater numbers and creating new avenues for partnership and connection. Here are the details for those who wish to join us:

- We will be traveling downtown as a group, meeting at 10:00 AM at the Skokie Swift (Dempster).
- Those who prefer to meet in the city may also do so. While our specific number in the parade route has yet to be released, we have been told that we'll be in the vicinity of the Wilson Metra stop near the Target and should be clearly identified by our float – a replica of Temple Shalom. I will also be sending out a reminder email next week to anyone who has registered through the office and this will contain up to date information, including the specific route marker and also my cell phone number.
- Please do register for the Parade by emailing Jackie Ernest, office@bhcb.org. While the deadline for t-shirts was yesterday, knowing who is planning on joining will allow us to better plan for the day and also to send out communications prior to the event as mentioned above.
- The parade officially begins at 12:00 and last year our group was finished around 4:00. Please make sure to prepare appropriately by bringing sufficient water and snacks, comfortable walking shoes, rain gear if necessary, etc. There is a Target store near where we will be beginning the parade route so provisions can be purchased day of if that is more convenient. Port-a-potty restrooms are spread out along the parade route, and the pace of the walk is such that one can quickly use the facilities and return to the group without becoming separated.
- If you have any questions, please feel free to be in touch: rabiannietucker@bhcb.org; 847-256-1213 x12.

I hope that we will see you on the 25th and wish everyone a very Happy Pride 2017!

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Annie Tucker