



For Immediate Release
Monday, June 29, 2020

On Sunday, June 28, 2020 multiple videos emerged of a small gathering of individuals who had engaged in a peaceful protest in Carbondale, IL. The videos show a transgender woman slammed against a police car, and other individuals standing nearby pepper sprayed by Carbondale police officers. These individuals had just participated in a demonstration representing queer people, recognizing the intersectionality of the queer community and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), and calling for an end to police brutality against these communities.

Earlier that day, the Rainbow Café LGBTQ Center hosted an event for Southern IL Pride Fest, a Drive-Thru Pride March which occurred along the Carbondale Strip, Rt. 13, and US S51. The City of Carbondale and the Carbondale Police Department were very helpful in assisting with traffic safety and supporting our event.

However, we are dismayed that after our event commemorating the Stonewall Uprising of 1969, a trans woman suffered this experience at the hands of the police, and other individuals from the LGBTQ community were pepper sprayed. It is an unfortunate fact that, according to the Anti-Violence Project, "trans people are 3.7 times more likely to experience police violence and 7 times more likely to experience physical violence when interacting with police than cisgender victims and survivors."

Furthermore, news accounts based on a press release from the Carbondale Police Department initially misgendered and deadnamed the woman, claiming charges of criminal damage to property and resisting arrest. While some of those news reports were updated to remove misgendering, the woman continues to be deadnamed until the Carbondale Police Department issues an update to the press release.

Regardless of any alleged violations, there is never an excuse for the use of excessive force.

And there is never an excuse to misgender or deadname a transgender person.

We are further dismayed by what we can only recognize as privilege. The organizers of our event were politely assisted by the Carbondale Police Department, who provided us help and support. We communicated that as a nonprofit organization that works with youth, we do not organize events that protest city officials or city organizations, and that we are not affiliated with the organizers of the event which occurred later that day. The timing of these events, and the

ensuing circumstances, is regrettable; as our organization was assisted and supported, others in the community were subject to excessive force, misgendering, and deadnaming.

We support the rights of all LGBTQ people, regardless of age, race, nationality, affiliation, or location. We strive to make Southern Illinois and our home base in Carbondale safe spaces for our community. The respect we were shown as an organization should be shown to everyone. We stand firmly against police brutality, excessive force, homophobic and transphobic behavior, and decry the public misgendering and deadnaming of this individual in a press release and in ensuing publication. We hope that there is an investigation into this incident, and that appropriate procedures and consequences are in place for officer misconduct. We also hope that the entire force receives training in the needs of the LGBTQ and BIPOC community and how best to serve them, with an emphasis on trans issues. We would be happy to work with the Carbondale Police Department in such training.

We strive to create a more accepting and equal world.

Sincerely,
The Rainbow Café LGBTQ Center Board of Directors

Tara Bell, she / her / hers
Board Chair; Founder and Facilitator of Southern Ill Pride Fest

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