

HOT SPRINGS LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY NETWORK NOH8 CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION RECAP

On May 13, 2026, seven representatives from the Hot Springs LGBTQ+ Community Network traveled to Little Rock to participate in the nationally recognized NOH8 Campaign photo event.

The event provided an opportunity for our organization to demonstrate solidarity with the broader LGBTQ+ community while supporting a campaign dedicated to promoting equality, inclusion, and anti-bullying efforts. Participation also allowed members to engage with individuals and organizations from across Arkansas and further strengthen our visibility within statewide LGBTQ+ advocacy efforts.

The total organizational cost associated with participation in the event was \$92.75.

A significant outcome of the event was the opportunity to connect directly with NOH8 Campaign founders Adam Bouska and Jeff Parshley. Valuable conversations were held regarding the campaign's mission, future opportunities, and the potential for bringing a NOH8 Campaign event to Hot Springs.

The Network has obtained contact information for campaign leadership and intends to continue discussions regarding the possibility of hosting a NOH8 Campaign event in Hot Springs. Current goals include exploring opportunities to incorporate the campaign into an existing event by the end of 2026 or planning a dedicated event during 2027.

Official NOH8 campaign photographs are expected to be delivered approximately six to eight weeks following the event. Once received, the images will be published through official NOH8 Campaign channels and made available for organizational use and promotion.

Overall, participation in the event was a positive experience that expanded organizational relationships, increased visibility for the Network, and created opportunities for future collaboration with a nationally recognized LGBTQ+ advocacy initiative

HOT SPRINGS LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY NETWORK 2026 PRIDE PICNIC RECAP

The Hot Springs LGBTQ+ Community Network hosted its 3rd Annual Pride Picnic on May 30, 2026, at the Arc Isle Event Center. Overall, the event was highly successful and generated overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees, vendors, volunteers, sponsors, and community partners.

Attendance throughout the day was estimated to peak between 70 and 80 participants. The event featured community vendors, entertainment, networking opportunities, food, family-friendly activities, and opportunities for community engagement and visibility.

Strengths and Successes

- Strong community participation and attendance.
- Positive feedback received from attendees and partners.
- Structured event schedule that helped guide programming throughout the day.
- Successful vendor participation and community engagement.
- Effective use of the Arc Isle Event Center space once final layout adjustments were made.
- Strong volunteer support and teamwork throughout the event.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Event Layout Planning

While the event ultimately functioned very well, there was some confusion during setup regarding the physical layout of the event. Future planning should include earlier discussions and a finalized site map prior to event day. Once established, the layout that evolved during the event proved effective and should be considered as the preferred layout model for future events held at the Arc Isle Event Center.

Vendor Management and Event Administration

The organization should fully utilize Zeffy for future events, including:

- Vendor applications
- Vendor payments
- Vendor guidelines and agreements
- Event communications and announcements
- Real-time access to information for event coordinators and the Treasurer

Using Zeffy will streamline event administration, centralize records, reduce duplicate documentation, and improve communication with vendors and.

Additionally future events should have implementation of the following:

- Notification email reminding vendors prior to event of guidelines
- Clearly communicated setup and teardown schedules

Sales Tax Exemption

The organization should prioritize obtaining Arkansas sales tax exemption status. This will help reduce future event expenses by eliminating sales tax on eligible purchases such as supplies, merchandise, promotional materials, and operational needs.

Merchandise Planning

Future merchandise purchases should be planned further in advance to allow sufficient time for:

- Cost comparisons
- Vendor evaluations
- Design revisions
- Alternative sourcing options

Advanced planning will help ensure the best pricing and quality while maximizing fundraising and promotional opportunities.

Food Service Operations

Future Pride Picnics should include grilling onsite rather than prior to the event whenever feasible. This approach will improve food service timing, enhance the attendee experience, and better integrate food preparation into event operations.

Additionally, due to such a popular demand I believe next year's event should include increasing pork tenderloin quantities while reducing hot dog and chicken purchase. Redirecting the savings to the higher-demand items.

Conclusion

The 2026 Pride Picnic was a successful event that strengthened community connections, increased organizational visibility, and provided an affirming and welcoming environment for attendees. While there are opportunities for improvement in planning, logistics, and administrative processes, the overall outcome was extremely positive. The lessons learned from this year's event provide a strong foundation for continued growth and success in future Pride Picnics and community events.