

Disability Pride: Why the Disability Pride Parade and the Visual Art Contest Exist

The NYC Disability Pride Parade began in 2015 to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Parade remembers the struggles, celebrates the achievements, and reminds us that much has yet to be done in the struggle for equal access, opportunity, and inclusion in all aspects of life. Each year, participants are welcomed by speakers, followed by a march along the parade route. At the end of the route, there are performances and booths showcasing various organizations contributing to the lively atmosphere of the day.

Participants marching in the parade adopt themes that are displayed at their tables, and on their flyers, and are featured in their posters. This year the NYC Department of Education (DOE) is adopting the theme, *Disability Rights Are Civil Rights*, for the parade. Drawing on the Civil Rights movement, emboldened disability rights advocates and activists took action, demanding change that led to landmark legislation ensuring equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. The theme, *Disability Rights Are Civil Rights*, represent actions taken to gain meaningful, and equal access to full participation in all aspects of community life, including education, employment, transportation, health, and independent living opportunities. There was a long and arduous struggle before the passage of the historic Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, the civil rights legislation prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities and requiring equal access to the essential elements of life in the community. There is still more that needs to be done.

The NYC DOE is committed to ensuring that every student is seen and accepted for who they are. All children and their families should feel confident that they have equal access to an excellent education and their children are welcomed and embraced within NYC schools. For this reason, the DOE has participated in this annual parade since its inception, giving every student, family, and educator a chance to show their pride and join in solidarity.

Recognizing that art is an invaluable means of expression and communication, the DOE is encouraging teachers to engage their students in developing visual representations of what the slogan, *Disability Rights Are Civil Rights*, means to them. Teachers and their students are asked to join the DOE in commemorating and honoring the NYC disability community through participation in the Disability Pride Parade Visual Art Contest and the Disability Pride Parade in July 2019. For more information about the Disability Pride Parade Visual Art Contest and the Disability Pride Parade in July 2019 join our mailing list at www.bit.ly/DPPContest2019.



2017 Disability Pride Parade



2018 Disability Pride Parade Visual Art Contest Grand Prize Winner