

# PRIDE CALGARY

## SO MUCH MORE THAN PARADE AND PARK FESTIVAL

WE HAVE OVER 40 EVENTS.  
WE HAVE A BRAND NEW  
PARADE ROUTE, WE HAVE  
A BRAND NEW VENUE —  
EVERYTHING'S CHANGING

— Jason Kingsley, president  
and executive producer of Calgary  
Pride

Grand Marshal for this year's parade, Lois Szabo (right),  
opened Alberta's first legal gay and lesbian club. KELLY HOFER

### Growing annual celebration kicks off with many fun events hosted throughout community

Calgary is booming again. After unprecedented growth and support, Calgary Pride is moving on up.

"It's the largest yet; we have 175 confirmed parade entries, which is up from 140 last year," says Jason Kingsley, president and executive producer of Calgary Pride. "We have over 40 events. We have a brand new parade route, we have a brand new venue — everything's changing."

The biggest upgrade is new digs at Prince's Island Park — the organization points out it's the first event to move into the park in recent years, as other major festivals are downsizing. "And our parade route is moving from 9th Avenue to 6th Avenue, so we can end right at the park," Kingsley says.

The new parade route runs west from 3 Street SE to 6 Street SW, then north along

6 Street SW to 3 Avenue SW. The parade starts at noon, Sept. 3, and the outdoor cultural festival Pride in the Park immediately follows.

Helming the parade as Grand Marshal this year is Calgary's own Lois Szabo, a trailblazer who opened Club Carousel — the first legal gay and lesbian club in Alberta, incorporated in 1970 — just so members of the community could simply have a drink together. These days, that party takes over the streets.

While Calgary Pride attributes its growth to support from the LGBTQ2+ community, its numerous partners and the City of Calgary, it certainly knows how to return the favour: Last year's impact study revealed that the festival generated \$5.5 million of economic activity in the province and brought 8,000 guests to the city.

Dozens of events contributed to that, of course — Calgary Pride festivities are so much more than the parade and park festival. Officially starting this past Friday, the coming weeks are packed with karaoke, pub nights, family barbecues, AIDS walks, hikes, brunches, dinners, potlucks, and all kinds of

parties — from patio to beach to club. The last few events of Calgary Pride land in late September.

To help narrow it all down, Kingsley's picked out a handful of his favourites — the highlights of the whole rainbow:

#### Gay History Walks (Thursday night and Sept. 2)

"These history walks, led by the Calgary Gay History Project's leader Kevin Allen, are a huge hit, drawing bigger crowds each year," Kingsley says — walkers have even reached 150 people.

"Kevin has done a phenomenal job curating stories and tidbits about our city's tumultuous LGBTQ2+ history, and takes you on a walk through a city that you only thought you knew, until he pulls the curtain back and shows the fascinating hidden stories behind everyday places."

#### Apollo Softball Slam (A.S.S.) Tournament (Sept. 2)

Why not kick some A.S.S. on the field? And

soothe those sore muscles later with a cold brew.

"This event is great in that it's one of the few events that really gets you up and moving, and it's a great way to just have a fabulous time with some great people and enjoy a fun game of softball," Kingsley says.

"Plus, you can spend the day on the field, then still have your whole evening to enjoy all the parties that night!"

#### The Rocky Horror Picture Show (Sept. 3)

Yes, costumes are encouraged. Yes, audience participation will be wild.

"What better way to wrap up your Pride Week than a little Time Warp?" Kingsley quips.

"Back by popular demand, the cult classic Rocky Horror Picture Show can only truly be experienced in a room full of raucous participants, and you'll find no shortage of this there!"

Visit [calgarypride.ca/events/](http://calgarypride.ca/events/) for more details and full events listings.

# 'GAY RAGER' RAISES FUNDS FOR SCHOOL

## Scholarship focuses on empowering LGBTQ2+ youth to meet goals of earning higher education

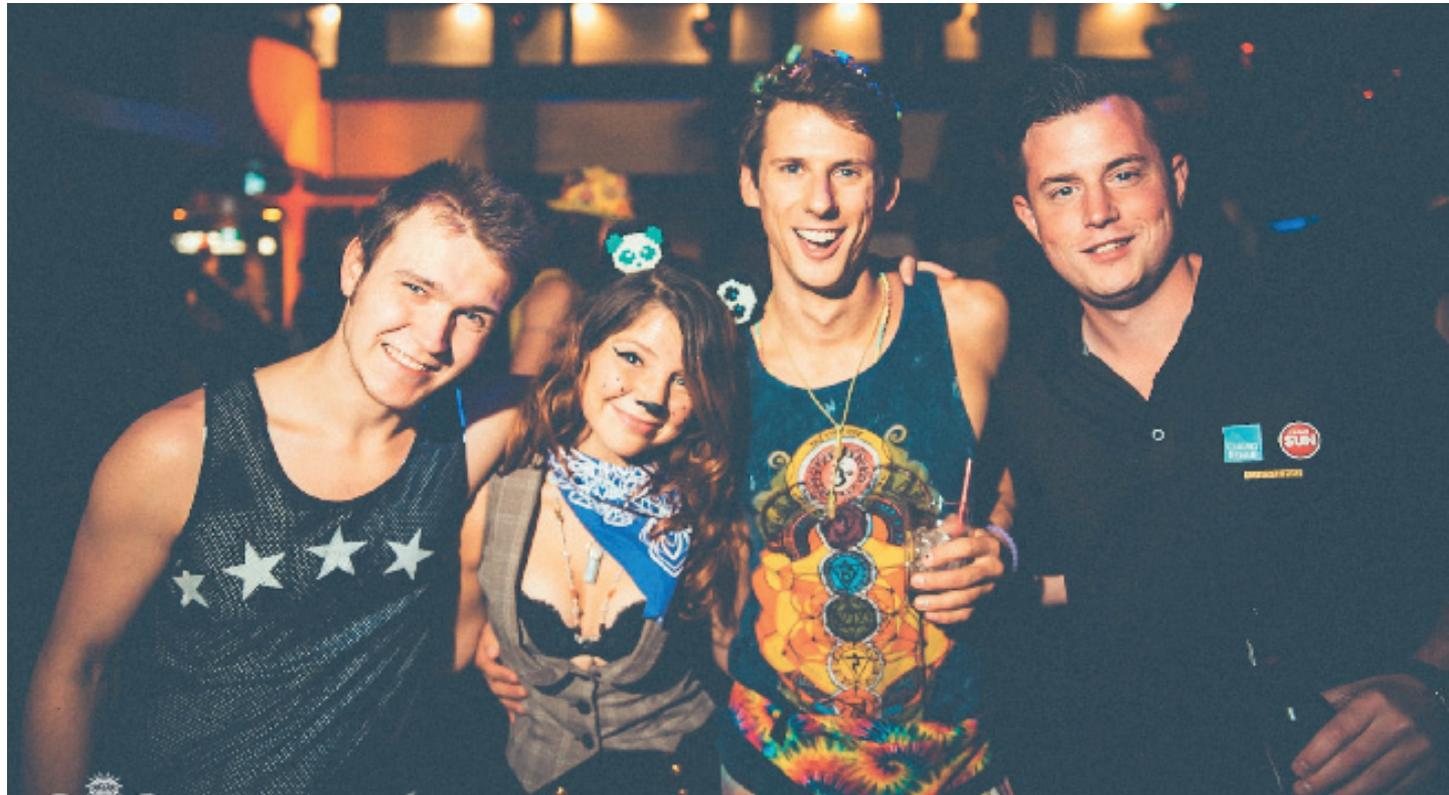
Dave Beninger has three words to describe last year's Gayger party: "It was amazing, amazing, amazing."

Amazing — quite the feat, considering it was the inaugural "gay rager" event to raise money for the new Pride Scholarship at Mount Royal University, which will award \$500 to two students for the first time this September.

"Last year was our big year," says Beninger, who helped start the scholarship, "figuring out the scholarship, getting officially set-up, everything was a lot of work.

"I couldn't have asked for a better night — we raised over \$2,000. It exceeded all expectations and everyone's really excited for the second one."

One of the dozens of events during Calgary Pride, Gayger lands on Sept. 8 at Twisted Element — doors open at 7:30 p.m., DJs start



Last year's Gayger party raised more than \$2,000 for the Pride Scholarship at Mount Royal University. THIRD EYE ARTS

spinning at 8:30 p.m., and drag queen shows hit the stage at 10 p.m. and midnight.

Cover is only \$5 for the 18+ party, and all cover proceeds go toward the scholarship. Even the six DJs, including Nic Nemesis and Weed Queen, accepted lower fees to help the charitable event.

Focusing on LGBTQ2+ youths and helping them pay for school was "filling a need,"

Beninger says, pointing out that scholarships were already available for specific ethnicities, religions or family backgrounds, among others.

"Those are all noble causes, but there was none there for LGBTQ2+ people who are probably more than 10 per cent of the population," he says. "It's about empowering people and helping them meet their goals.

"And it's also about justice," he adds, "because LGBTQ2+ people are more likely to drop out of high school, more likely to have higher absenteeism rates — a lot of that stems from bullying. So this is about correcting something."

Visit [facebook.com/PrideSAB/](https://facebook.com/PrideSAB/) for more details about the Gayger event and for information on how to donate.

# Sharing untold stories of Calgary's gay history in walking tour

As little as 50 years ago, Kevin Allen might have been thrown in jail.

Today — walking through roughly a dozen stops in Calgary, sharing the city's gay history with groups of strangers — the historian doesn't find it a bittersweet experience.

"I don't feel the past is painful; I think the past is complicated and there are some tragedies in it, but I also think it's an interesting story that doesn't get looked at too much in Calgary," he says.

"Calgary has a really dominant narrative about the Stampede and about energy exploration. But there are other stories in Calgary that have been basically unexplored and untold."

After quitting his day job to launch the Calgary Gay History Project in 2012 — and hosting his first walking tour in 2013 — Allen has just finished his "hyper-local" book on the topic and is working to get it



Researchers Kevin Allen (left), Nevena Ivanović and Jonathan Brower at the gay history information booth during Calgary Pride. CALGARY GAY HISTORY PROJECT

published this fall.

Clearly such a tome is needed; he says

people of all ages are genuinely surprised to learn the realities of life as a LGBTQ2+

person, just a few decades ago.

"I think there's little awareness, generally speaking, amongst millennials around some of the difficulties we've had in the past," says the researcher. "Although, that said, it seems like an eye-opener for everyone on the walks — when we say that we used to be incarcerated right up until in the late-60s, people just don't believe that ever happened in Canada. Even people who are more than 50 years old."

And, tapping the namesake of this week's celebrations, he adds, "It gives me a great sense of pride to share those stories."

The Downtown Gay History Walk will be held Thursday night, 7 p.m., starting at Hyatt Regency Calgary. The Beltline Gay History Walk will be held on Sept. 2, 2 p.m., starting at the CommunityWise Resource Centre.

Visit [calgarypride.ca/events/](https://calgarypride.ca/events/) for more information.