

The 20th Annual Newark Pride Festival // "Reclaiming OUR Time: Legacy of Resistance" // July 7-13, 2025

20



YEARS OF  
NEWARK  
PRIDE

SPONSORSHIP INVITATION

PRESENTED BY NEWARK PRIDE, INC.



# LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Community Partner,

I hope this letter finds you in strength and solidarity. As the President of Newark Pride, Inc., I am honored to invite you to stand with us as we mark a historic milestone—the 20th anniversary of Newark Pride. This year, under the theme "Reclaiming OUR Time: Legacy of Resistance," we not only celebrate two decades of visibility and community but also recognize the ongoing fight for justice, equity, and liberation.

Newark Pride was born out of necessity—a response to the senseless violence and attempted erasure of LGBTQ+ voices in our city and beyond. For 20 years, we have built a space of resistance and resilience, ensuring that Newark's LGBTQ+ community is seen, heard, and empowered. From our Pride Week celebrations to our year-round advocacy and outreach, we continue to fight for a future where every person—regardless of identity—can live freely and unapologetically.

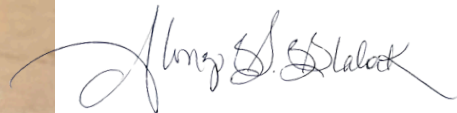
This milestone year is more than a celebration; it is a call to action. We are expanding our programming to include voter engagement initiatives, empowerment programs for LGBTQ+ youth, enrichment opportunities for seniors, year-round fellowship events, and the return of the Newark Proud Awards—a tribute to the changemakers who have paved the way for progress. These initiatives honor those who came before us, uplift those fighting today, and lay the groundwork for those who will carry the torch forward.

Sponsorship of Newark Pride, Inc. is more than a corporate opportunity—it is an act of solidarity. Your support directly fuels our mission to protect, uplift, and empower Newark's LGBTQ+ community. It is a declaration that your organization stands on the right side of history—against oppression, against discrimination, and for an inclusive future. Our sponsorship packages offer opportunities for visibility, social media engagement, and on-site presence during Newark LGBTQ+ Pride Week and beyond, ensuring your commitment to justice is seen and celebrated.

We invite you to reclaim this time with us and make our 20th anniversary a powerful testament to our collective strength. Your support will help sustain the fight, fuel the celebration, and remind the world that our voices will not be silenced. Please find the attached sponsorship deck, which outlines our sponsorship levels and benefits. We are happy to tailor a package that aligns with your organization's goals and values. Let's stand together and make Newark Pride 2025 a moment of power, remembrance, and renewal.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Our resistance is our legacy, and together, we will continue to reclaim OUR time.

Yours in Power and Pride,



Alonzo S. Blalock, President  
Newark Pride, Inc.







# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Alonzo S. Blalock**  
*Board President*



**June Dowell-Burton, MSW LSW**  
*Founder, Executive Secretary*



**Darius W. Edwards**  
*Board Member*



**Abe Gruswitz**  
*Board Member*



**Christene Carr**  
*Board Member*



**Kenrick Ross**  
*Financial Secretary*



**Michelle Ametekpor**  
*Junior Board Member*



**Jaivon Lewis**  
*Board Member*



**Sabrina Ramos**  
*Board Member*



**Lynette Lashawn, MLS**  
*Board Member*



**Esteban Rodriguez**  
*Board Member*



**Kareem Willis, PhD**  
*Board Member*



**Damien A. Lopez**  
*Board Member*



# ABOUT NEWARK PRIDE

## Organization History

Since its founding in 2005, Newark Pride, Inc. has been a steadfast advocate for visibility, equity, and empowerment within Newark's LGBTQIA+ community. The organization was established in the wake of the tragic murder of **Sakia Gunn**, a 15-year-old Black lesbian who was fatally attacked in downtown Newark in 2003. Her death exposed the urgent need for safer spaces, greater protections, and stronger representation for LGBTQIA+ individuals—particularly Black and Brown queer youth. In response, Newark Pride emerged as a force for social change, dedicated to fostering a city where LGBTQIA+ individuals can live openly and thrive.

## Impact on the Newark LGBTQ+ Community

- Newark LGBTQ+ Pride Week serves as a **major platform for visibility, connection, and economic empowerment**, drawing thousands to the Downtown Business District.
- Strengthens local businesses and fosters inclusive partnerships with corporate allies.
- Leads **policy discussions, social justice efforts, and grassroots organizing** to ensure LGBTQIA+ representation in Newark's growth and development.



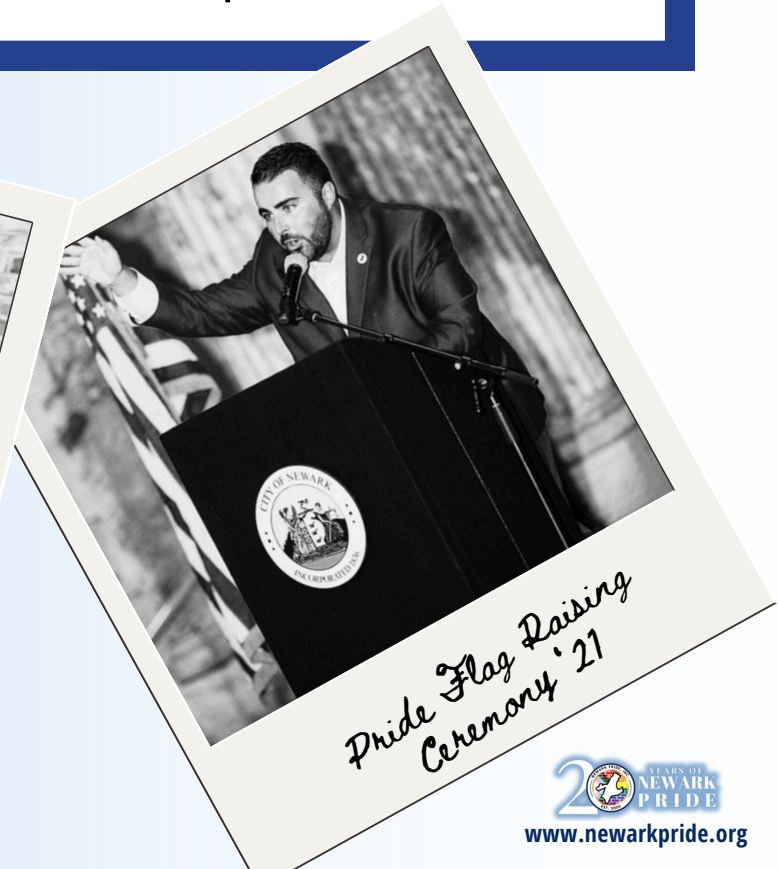
## Key Initiatives and Year-Round Programming

- **Newark Pride Festival** - Community fellowship events fostering connection and solidarity throughout the year.
- **Vogue The Vote Initiative** - Voter engagement efforts to increase LGBTQIA+ political participation and awareness.
- **ReignBeau Elite Youth Empowerment Program** - Offering mentorship, leadership opportunities, and safe spaces.
- **Monthly event collaborations** to push forward an agenda of equality, visibility, and lasting change for all.



# OUR MISSION

The Mission of Newark Pride, Inc is to increase awareness of the LGBTQ+ community by providing education, advocating for social justice, increasing progressive public policy, and developing opportunities for empowerment through fellowship.





# OUR HISTORY

2006

With the support of Mayor-Elect Cory Booker, Municipal Council and Essex County, the rainbow flag is raised for the first time in Newark in front of the Essex County Court as part of Pride Week.

2008

Filmmaker Charles "Chas" Brack directed and produced "Dreams Deferred: The Sakia Gunn Story".

2010

Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo Jr. established the Essex County LGBTQ Advisory Council.

2012

The Newark LGBTQ Commission and Newark's Youth Policy LGBTQ youth sub-committee published an LGBTQ Youth Position paper providing recommendations for creating a safer and more supportive environment for LGBTQ youth throughout the city. Mayor Cory Booker endorsed the paper.

2005

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2005

In July, the first Newark Gay Pride is held in Military Park under the direction of founder June Dowell-Burton.

2007

Mayor Cory Booker, Councilwoman Dana Rone, June Dowell-Burton, and Reverend Janyce Jackson raised the rainbow flag at the Newark City Hall for the first time to commemorate the beginning of Pride Week.

2009

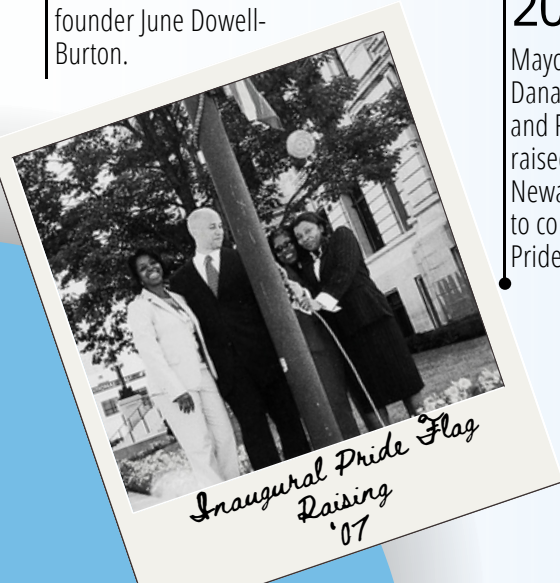
Newark becomes the first city in the state to form an LGBTQ Advisory Concerns Commission. "Dreams Deferred" screened at 35th Annual Newark Black Film Festival hosted by the Newark Museum.

2011

President Barack Obama invited Newark Gay Pride to the inaugural LGBTQ Pride month reception at the White House on June 29th. Newark Pride Alliance and the Hetrick-Martin Institute launched HMI To Go (an after-school LGBTQ program) realizing one of the official promises made after the death of Sakia Gunn. Rutgers University launched "Queer Newark: Oral History Project" to share and record the stories of three generations of LGBTQ Newark residents.

2013

The Newark LGBTQ Community Center is created as the product of a collaboration between existing groups serving Newark's LGBTQ community





# OUR HISTORY

2014

The NJ LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce is created and established its headquarters in Newark.

2016

Annual festival returned to Military Park. Newark Pride Parade marched from City Hall on Broad Street through downtown Newark where we honored Grand Marshall Tracey Africa, 1st transgender career model.

2018

In **January**, Newark Gay Pride and NJ Devils Pride Night hosted their 1st collaborative hockey event at Prudential Center. In **May**, Newark Gay Pride participates in New Jersey AIDS Walk. In **June**, BrickCityLive.com interviewed Newark Gay Pride.

2019

**July**. Mayor Ras J. Baraka officially designated the week of 14th Newark Pride Week. President Sharronda Wheeler debuts on Insider NJ's Out 100 LGBT Power List at #70

2021

**July**. Rebranded Newark LGBTQ Pride Festival is first to return in-person community programming with nearly 45 collaborative sponsors and partners. **October**. President Wheeler ranked #21 on NJ Insiders OUT 100 LGBT Power List, while Vice President Alonzo S. Blalock debuts at #43.

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

2015

Newark Gay Pride celebrated its 10 year anniversary.

2017

In **January**, Newark Gay Pride and NJ Devils Pride Night hosted their 1st collaborative hockey event at Prudential Center. In **May**, Newark Gay Pride participates in New Jersey AIDS Walk. In **June**, BrickCityLive.com interviewed Newark Gay Pride. Newark Gay Pride welcomed new corporate sponsorships with Prudential and RPM Development. In **July**, Newark Gay Pride spoke with WBGO about President Trump's ban on transgender participation in the military. Newark Gay Pride co-sponsored with Lincoln Park Music Festival and provided LGBTQ representation during the 3-day festival.

2020

Despite the nation facing a global pandemic, Newark Pride continued to provide programming for the community, near and far! In **June** 2020, Sharronda Wheeler was featured on Queer Newark OHP. In October 2020, she was also listed as #39 on Insider NJ's Out 100 LGBT Power List. Additionally in **October** Newark Gay Pride received the 2020 Census Appreciation Award. In **November**, Sharronda Wheeler also received an award for the 10 Newark Creators NJPAC Virtual Series.



Ms. Theresa '15



Pride Flag Raising '21





# OUR HISTORY

2022

**June.** President Sharronda Wheeler ranked #27 on NJ Insiders OUT 100 LGBT Power List, while Vice President Alonzo S. Blalock at #39. I

**July,** Newark LGBTQ Pride exceeds funding goals of \$50,000 with help from corporate donors.

**October,** VP Blalock honored by Garden State Equality with Equality Leadership Award.

2024

**October.** Vogue The Vote Campaign is adopted into NPI programming, endorsed by Mayor Ras J. Baraka with EVP Blalock as Chairman.

**November.** President Sharronda Wheeler ranks #24 and Executive Vice President Alonzo S. Blalock ranks at #39 on NJ Insiders OUT 100 LGBT Power List. V

**December.** PSE&G awards Newark Pride \$1K grant towards ReignBeau Elite Youth Empowerment Program. Newark Pride is also awarded \$125,000 Festivals United grant by Newark Alliance and NJEDA.

2026

2029

2027

2022

2023

2024

2025

2026

2027

2028

2029

2023

**July.** Executive Vice President Alonzo S. Blalock ranks at #81 on NJ Insiders OUT 100 LGBT Power List. Newark LGBTQ Pride Festival exceeds funding goal of \$60,000 and lands Mars-Wrigley as Marquee Sponsor with a \$25,000 donation.

2025

**February.** Newark Pride is awarded \$5K event grant by Prudential North 2 Shore Festival 2025.

2028







# FESTIVAL WEEK OVERVIEW

## 2025 FESTIVAL THEME

*This year's theme -- "**Reclaiming OUR Time: Legacy of Resistance**" -- recognizes the time, energy, and activism our community has poured into fighting for rights, visibility, and justice. It's about reclaiming space, agency, and power—from the ballroom scene to political advocacy. It also honors the trailblazers before us, from activists like Marsha P. Johnson to local LGBTQ+ leaders and allies. Newark has long been a hub for radical Black and Brown queer activism, and this festival will showcase our resilience, culture, and progress.*

## MAJOR EVENTS

**7/7** PRIDE FLAG RAISING CEREMONY + OPENING RECEPTION

**7/8** SAKIA GUNN DAY OF SERVICE

**7/9** WELLNESS WEDNESDAY

**7/10** PRIDE EN BLANC MEMORIAL DINNER

**7/11** THE 4TH ANNUAL LEGACY BALL @ NJPAC

**7/12** LPMF BAR CRAWL / MR & MISS NEWARK PRIDE 2025 PAGEANT

**7/13** 20TH ANNUAL PRIDE PARADE + CONCERT + FESTIVAL

## FESTIVAL DAY ACTIVATIONS

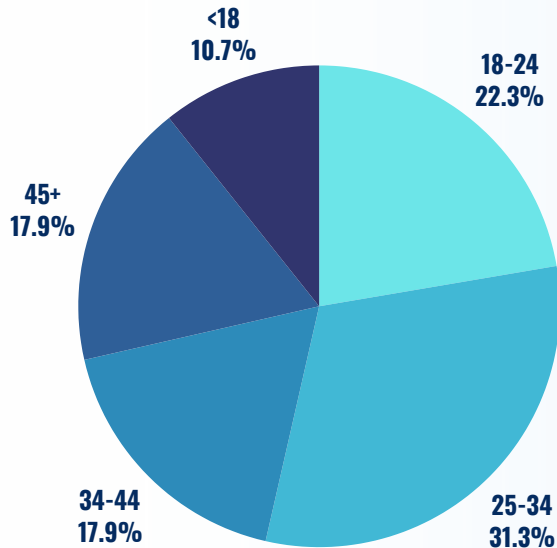
- PRIDE PARADE + FREEDOM MARCH
- LIVE PERFORMANCES ON THE RODNEY GILBERT MAINSTAGE
- THE FAMILY ZONE
- HEALTH & WELLNESS ROW
- FOOD TRUCKS + MOBILE BARS
- ARTISAN MERCHANDISE VENDORS

**+ MORE**

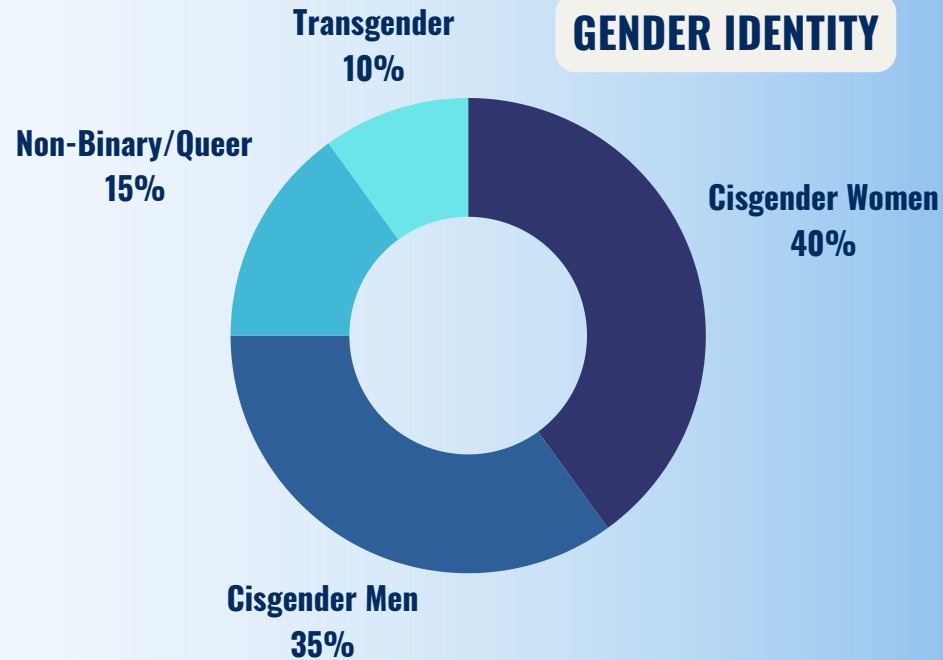
# AUDIENCE & DEMOGRAPHICS

**EXPECTED ATTENDANCE: 6K+** (BASED ON PAST FESTIVAL ATTENDANCE AND NEWARK'S LGBTQ COMMUNITY TRENDS)

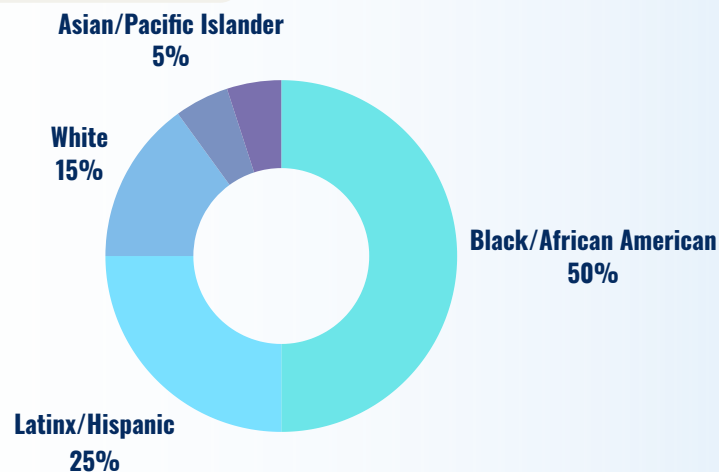
## AGE DISTRIBUTION



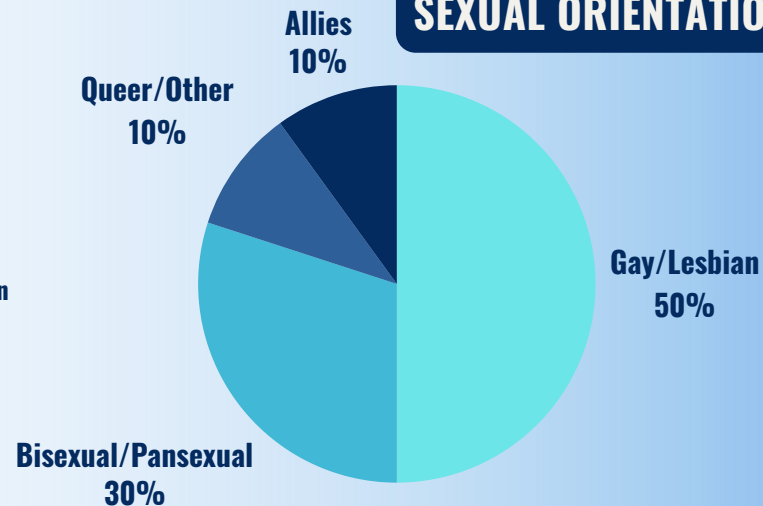
## GENDER IDENTITY



## ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN



## SEXUAL ORIENTATION





# MARKETING & MEDIA REACH

(BASED ON CURRENT DIGITAL PRESENCE)

## SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

- Instagram: **3K+**
- Facebook: **12.6K+**
- Twitter/X: **500+**

**TikTok + BlueSky accounts on the way!**

## ENGAGEMENT METRICS

- Average Post Reach: **15K+ impressions/post**
- Monthly Social Impressions: **200K+**
- Engagement Rate: **6-8%** (*above industry average*)
- Most-used hashtags: **#NewarkPride**  
**#NewarkGayPride** **#UnitedWeStand**  
**#LegacyofLiberation** **#PowerInPride**

## WEBSITE TRAFFIC

- Unique Visitors Per Month: **10K+**
- Peak Traffic During Festival Season: **50K+ page views**

## MEDIA/MARKETING PARTNERS:



# CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sponsorship Levels	Naming Rights \$25,000	Marquee \$20,000	Key \$15,000	Signature \$10,000	Love \$5,000
Naming Rights for 2025 Pride Festival	○				
Page Premium Space in 2025 Pride Guide	2 full page	1 full page	1 full page	1/2 full page	1/4 full page
Logo on all marketing materials	○	○	○		
Hyperlink to company page	○	○	○		
VIP Tickets to all events	6	4	3	2	2
Parade/Float Space (in units)	2	1	1	1	1
Logo on Welcome Banner	○	○	○	○	○
Seats to Flag Raising at City Hall	3 front row	2 front row	2 front row	2 reserved	2 reserved
Press Opportunity at all events	○	○	○	○	
Verbal recognition at all events	○	○	○	○	○
Premium vendor space at festival (up to 10x30 tent)	○				
Vendor space at festival (up to 10x30 tent)		○			
Vendor space at festival (up to 10x20 tent)			○		
Vendor space at festival (up to 10x10 tent)				○	○
President's Circle Seat	○	○			

Your donation will support annual programming and events that help inspire, educate, commemorate and celebrate our diverse community. Help us work toward a future without discrimination where all people have equal rights under the law and provide safe spaces to live and love freely.

**If you are unable to make a full sponsorship or monetary donation but would still like to contribute to Newark Pride, Inc., consider all in-kind donations:**

- Donation up to \$999.00
- Food & Drinks
- Printing

- Entertainment
- Venue
- Gift Bags





# SPONSORSHIP VS. PARTNERSHIP

## Customized Sponsorship Activations Available!

- Branded lounges, VIP areas, and digital experiences
- Product placement & sampling
- Customized influencer partnerships with LGBTQ+ content creators
- Employee Resource Group Meet & Greet with Presentations

## Become a Community Programs Partner

Partnering with our grassroots-led movement of engaging a dedicated audience of LGBTQ+ advocates, allies, and families offers businesses and brands to gain the opportunity to host workshops, panels, and resource hubs that foster community empowerment and meaningful connections all year long. Submit your program ideas directly on our RFP webpage!





# SCHOLARSHIP & IN-KIND

We invite you to be part of something truly impactful. By partnering with Newark Pride, Inc., you're not only supporting New Jersey's premiere Pride celebration but also helping to create a stronger, more inclusive community right here in Newark. As we continue to grow, your sponsorship can make all the difference in expanding our reach, enhancing our programs, and creating unforgettable experiences.

## REASONS TO SPONSOR:

- 1 Brand Visibility**  
Your brand will be prominently featured across digital, print, and on-site activations with exposure to 10,000+ attendees and over 200,000 digital impressions.
- 2 Diversity & Inclusion Impact**  
Align your brand with one of the largest Black and Brown LGBTQ+ events in the region, demonstrating genuine corporate social responsibility (CSR). Be part of a growing movement that is continuing to campaign for equal rights both in Newark, NJ and around the world.
- 3 Engagement Opportunities**  
Sponsors can create interactive brand experiences, sponsor major events, or lead community impact initiatives like wellness programs and youth engagement.
- 4 Exclusive Media Exposure**  
Partnership includes potential press mentions in both local, online, and major media outlets covering LGBTQ+ Pride events nationwide.

## What your support will help us achieve.

Your donation will go directly toward events and initiatives that uplift and empower Newark's LGBTQ+ community. Plus, it's a fantastic opportunity for your brand to be seen as a champion for diversity, inclusion, and equality. Join us in making Newark Pride bigger, better, and more impactful than ever—your support matters!



### **\$2,500 - June Dowell-Burton Scholarship Fund**

An earmarked donation to our Founder's Scholarship will provide funds toward tuition or books for high school graduates entering college.



### **\$2,000 - Leadership Scholarship**

This earmarked donation will fund one young adult seeking to cultivate their leadership development by attending programs like Leadership Newark.



### **\$1,500 - Helping Hands Fund**

This donation level funds supplies to local LGBTQ+ friendly shelters for welcome kits including toiletries, slippers, robe, etc.



### **\$1,000 - Kid Zone**

The donation level will support the Kid Zone at the annual Newark LGBTQ+ Pride annual festival.



# PAST SPONSORS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Skittles



GILEAD

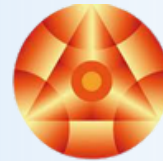


Peter Ho  
Memorial Center  
at Saint Michael's Medical Center



Prudential

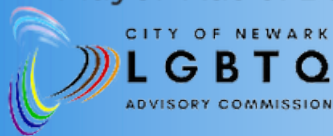
Newark  
Happening



AAOGC

MARS WRIGLEY  
Confectionery

CITY OF  
NEWARK  
Mayor Ras J. Baraka



njpac

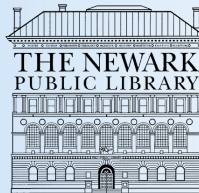


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NEW JERSEY



RUTGERS  
UNIVERSITY | NEWARK

HYACINTH  
STRENGTHENING HEALTH,  
SECURING WELLNESS



University  
HOSPITAL  
Newark, NJ



SPACE

STEAMURBAN



ARTfront  
GALLERIES

RUTGERS  
New Jersey Medical School



THE  
NEWARK  
MUSEUM  
OF ART



QUEER NEWARK  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

MEDALLION  
AT THE POBBET TIDEAL HOTEL

Dutch's

nico  
kitchen+bar

AHF

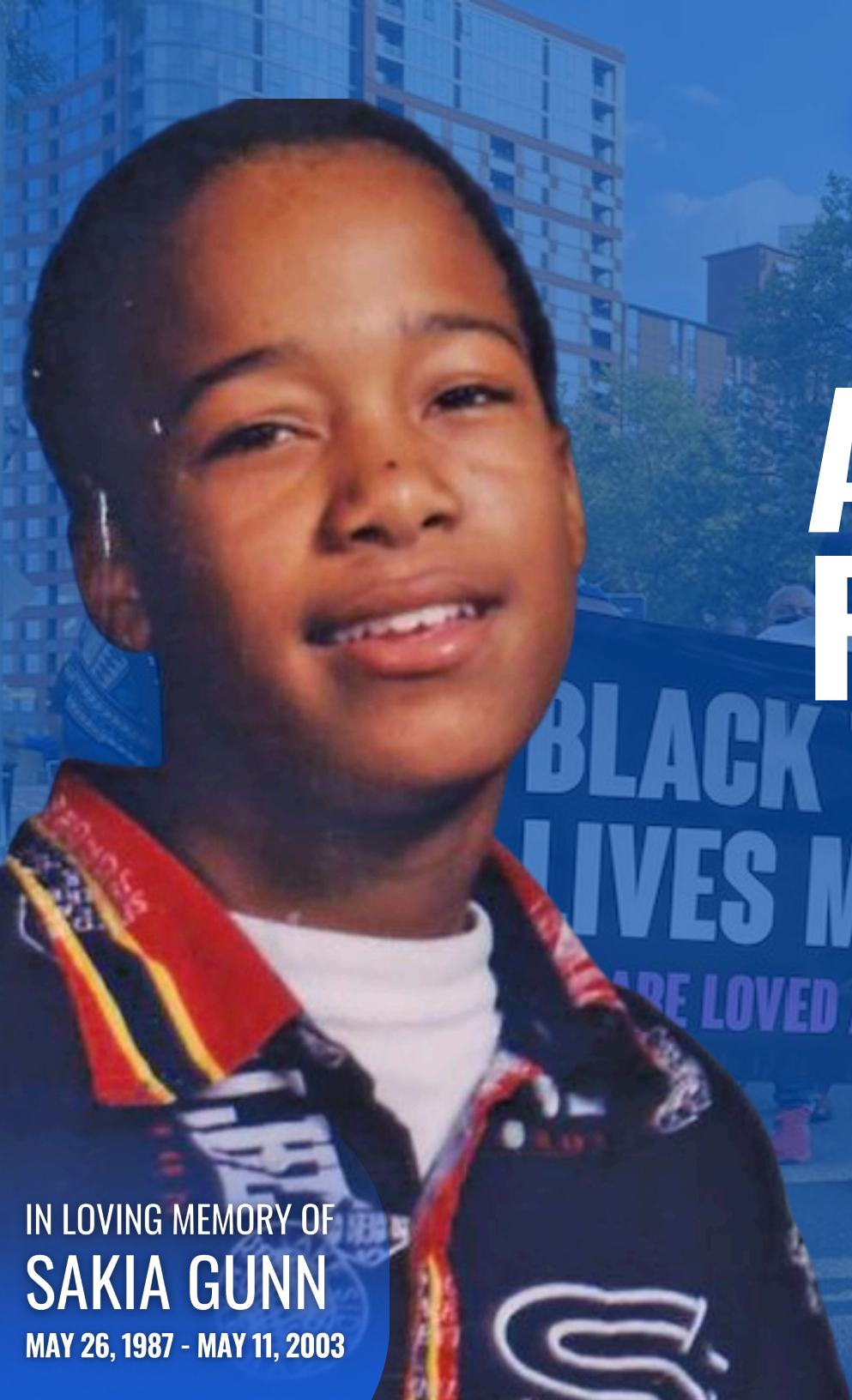


TRYP  
BY WYNDHAM

pES  
studio



GET REAL  
WITH  
DAKOTA



# 20



YEARS OF  
**NEWARK  
PRIDE**

# ANNIVERSARY FUND

**DONATE**

*Your support ensures that Sakia Gunn's legacy is honored—not with silence, but with action. Every donation fuels our mission, strengthens our programs, and helps us build a future where every LGBTQ+ person in Newark, NJ can live with pride and dignity.*



IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
**SAKIA GUNN**  
MAY 26, 1987 - MAY 11, 2003

For more information visit [www.newarkpride.org/donate](http://www.newarkpride.org/donate)



# NEXT STEPS

Let's discuss a sponsorship\* level that aligns with your brand's mission and outreach goals. Schedule a meeting TODAY!

*\*Custom sponsorship & activation ideas available upon request.*

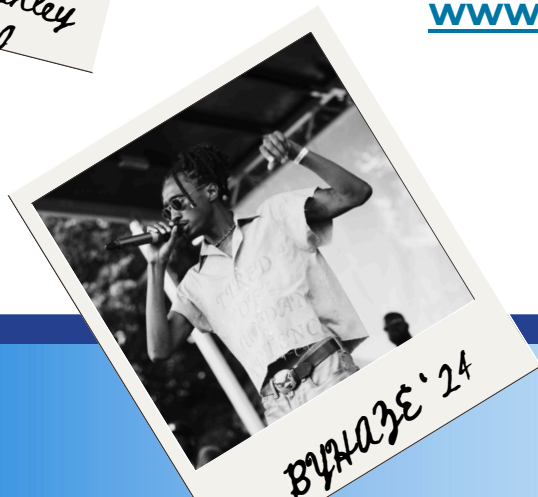
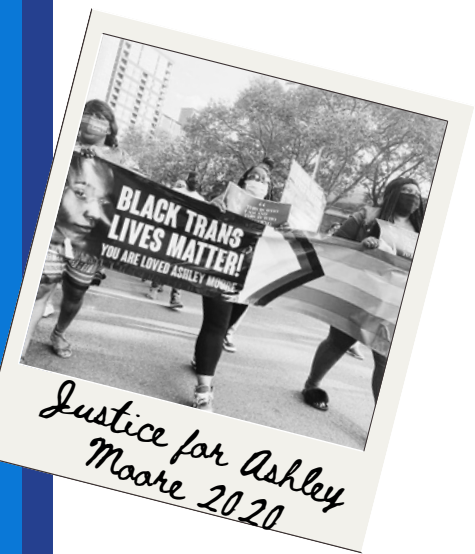
## CONTACT:

Alonzo S. Blalock, President  
info@newarkpride.org  
(201) 279-3142

Submit Sponsorship Application online at

[www.newarkpride.org/sponsor](http://www.newarkpride.org/sponsor)

Thank you 





# RECLAIMING OUR TIME

NEWARK PRIDE FEST 2025

The 20th Annual Newark Pride Festival // “Reclaiming OUR Time: Legacy of Resistance” // July 7-13, 2025