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STATE, 3A

# Palladium-Item

MONDAY, JULY 1, 2019 ■ RICHMOND, IND.



Free stickers were handed out to attendees of the Rainbow Richmond Pride Festival on Saturday. The event is believed to be the first Pride festival to be held in the city. PHOTOS BY JORDAN KARTHOLL / PALLADIUM-ITEM

## Rainbow Richmond Pride Festival draws a crowd

**Jordan Kartholl**  
Richmond Palladium-Item  
USA TODAY NETWORK

In the final weekend of Pride month, after a year of planning that culminated in a last-minute reschedule due to a torrential downpour, organizer and college student Benjamin Guard could finally say Richmond had its first Pride festival ever.

"This is important for Richmond because at the end of the day equality is what everyone deserves," Guard said. "Everyone is human in their own, equal right and this is just the beginning of what Rainbow Richmond will be doing in the local area."

More than a hundred people braved the heat at Jack Elstro Plaza for the festival Saturday afternoon. The Rainbow Richmond Pride Festival featured four musical acts which were followed by family-friendly drag show performances.

Between 2006 and 2013, advocacy group Rainbow Richmond held Pride Picnics, attended the city's 4th Street Fair and marched in Indy Pride parades. In 2013, after participation dwindled, the group donated its resources to Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays and ceased most of its operations.

Last June, disappointed with the lack of representation in Richmond, gender and sexual minority groups from local colleges began the process of planning a revival of Rainbow Richmond.

Guard said the response from the community has been mostly positive.

"There's been some negative backlash on conservative pages ... there's always going to be someone on the internet



**A drag performer dances on stage at Jack Elstro Park during the Rainbow Richmond Pride Festival on Saturday. Four live music performances were followed by a series of family-friendly drag show routines.**

telling us we are doing something wrong," Guard said. "For every one voice that comes out against us, though, I can find a hundred that are for us."

Rainbow Richmond hopes to hold meetings open to the public in the near future. Updates on meeting times and events will be posted to the group's Facebook page.

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**Attendees look to a splash park at Jack Elstro Plaza for an escape from the heat during the Rainbow Richmond Pride Festival. The Saturday festival fell on the final weekend of Pride Month after it's initially scheduled date was pushed back due to weather.**

