

The History of the Rainbow Pride Flag and its Use in Flossmoor

The Village of Flossmoor proudly recognizes June as Pride Month, a month that celebrates the LGBTQ+ community and honors equal rights activists and participants of the 1969 Stonewall Inn riots. The Village displays the Rainbow LGBT Pride flag through Downtown Flossmoor as a symbol of pride for the LGBTQ+ people, to strengthen the bonds of solidarity, celebrate our differences, and continue to promote social progress and acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community.

By recognizing Pride Month with the flying of the Rainbow LGBT Pride flag, we acknowledge that our community is strengthened by our diversity and that representation is important to our community, two pillars of the Village of Flossmoor's commitment to diversity and inclusion. In 2017, the Village Board identified diversity and inclusion as priorities of the Village's strategic plan and community identity. In June 2019, the Village hosted a Pride Month celebration which included the first display of pride flags in Downtown Flossmoor.

The Village proudly flies the American Flag, the Flossmoor flags, and the Pan-African flag for Black History Month, and the Rainbow LGBT Pride flag for Pride Month. This visual display represents the Village's dedication to inclusion and celebration of diversity while also recognizing we are all part of a larger community – a community where we all belong.

Designed by artist and gay rights activist Gilbert Baker, the Rainbow LGBT Pride flag is the result of the late Harvey Milk, an influential gay leader and San Francisco City Supervisor, challenging Baker to create a symbol of pride for “the dawn of a new gay consciousness and freedom” and the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade on June 25, 1978. After the assassination of Milk on November 2, 1978, demand for Baker's rainbow flag greatly increased and instead of the flags being handmade, as they were during the June 1978 parade, they moved to commercial production.

Many variations of the rainbow flag exist and are displayed nationally and internationally. However, the most-commonly used version of the flag displays the six colored stripes of the rainbow; red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet. According to Baker's original design, which featured a hot pink stripe and a turquoise stripe, each color represents an element of the LGBTQ+ community. While the hot pink and turquoise stripes were removed when the flags moved to commercial production, the meaning for the other six colors remain the same: Red – Life, Orange – Healing, Yellow – Sunlight, Green – Nature, Blue – Serenity, and Violet – Spirit.

Recent variations of the pride flag include the Philadelphia eight-stripe flag, which introduced the inclusion of black and brown stripes to acknowledge the struggles of LGBTQ+ people of color. The Progress Pride Flag, designed by Daniel Quasar, incorporates elements of the Philadelphia and Trans Pride flag to bring focus on inclusion and progress within the community. Instead of adding stripes, the Progress Pride Flag includes a chevron on the left hem featuring the trans flag colors in addition to the brown and black stripes of the Philadelphia flag. Variations of the Rainbow LGBT Pride flag continue to be designed and

introduced throughout the world, with each representing a new level of acceptance and understanding of the LGBTQ+ community.

While many different variations of the flag exist and new designs are introduced frequently, the Village currently displays the six-striped Rainbow LGBT Pride flag and acknowledges and respects all variations of the flag. Today, the Rainbow LGBT Pride flag remains a symbol of pride, progress and unity, as well as continued activism for equality for the LGBTQ+ community. During the month of June, we encourage all of Flossmoor to celebrate Pride by flying their own rainbow pride flags, whichever variation speaks most to them.