



# Heritage of Pride, Inc

Heritage of Pride, Inc, 112 Christopher Street., New York, NY 10014  
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## NYC Pride Announces A Virtual Rally

**Hosted by Ashlee Marie Preston and Brian Michael Smith**

*Streamed live via Facebook & YouTube, Friday, June 26*

NEW YORK, NY, June 3, 2020 — NYC Pride, the organization responsible for executing LGBTQIA+ events in New York City in the month of June, announces plans for a virtual **Rally** on Friday, June 26, 2020, from 5pm to 8pm EDT. Streamed simultaneously on Facebook and YouTube, the event will be hosted by **Ashlee Marie Preston** and **Brian Michael Smith**. Speakers include **Ceyenne Doroshow**, **Annie Segarra**, **Edafe Okporo**, **Leandro E. Rodriguez Ramos** and many more.

“I’m beyond excited to co-host the digital rally with NYC Pride this year,” said Ashlee Marie Preston. “The current socio-political climate around LGBTQ rights is similar to that of the 1960s; but our commitment to shattering systemic barriers that impede our ability to thrive is exactly the same as it was for our foremothers—Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera. Poisonous policies, patriarchal power, nor the pandemonium of a pandemic will thwart our progress. I’m constantly reminded by the indomitable Miss Major Griffin-Gracy that after the dust settles, we will still be here!”

Preston is the first trans woman to become Editor in Chief of a national publication and the first openly trans person to run for state office in California. Ashlee Marie was named one of The Root 100's "Most Influential African Americans of 2017", profiled as one of LOGO/NewNowNext's 30 Most Influential LGBTQ Influencers of 2017 & 2018, PopSugar's top 40 LGBTQ's of 2017 and OUT Magazine's OUT100 of 2018. Amid the COVID-19 crisis, Ashlee Marie launched YouAreEssential.org in support of grassroots organizations all across the country, serving vulnerable communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

“Visibility is also a form of activism,” said Brian Michael Smith. “For so many people just living in your truth and stepping outside takes courage; that is a protest in and of itself. I am proud to co-host the NYC Pride Rally with Ashlee Marie Preston and I know that though we can’t be together in person, we are reaching people who may see themselves in us. I hope to provide a space of comfort at a time when we need to be there for one another.”

Smith, originally hailing from Michigan, is an LGBTQIA+ advocate, coming out as transgender in 2017 after successfully working in the industry for five years. In December 2019, Smith joined Showtime's drama series “The L Word: Generation Q” cast, the highly anticipated follow-up series. Soon after, in January 2020, Smith premiered in Ryan Murphy's Fox series “9-1-1 LONE STAR” starring Rob Lowe and Liv Tyler. The series is a Texas spinoff of the hit series “9-1-1.” Smith plays ‘Paul Strickland,’ a transgender male firefighter with a gift for observation worthy of Sherlock Holmes. He becomes one of just a handful of trans and non-binary regulars on broadcast TV.

“Stories of intersectionality have always been important stories to tell. As a gay, Puerto Rican, cisgender man I try to remain aware of both my privilege and what society has put in place as barriers in my life,” said **NYC Pride Interim Executive Director David A. Correa**. “It is important to stand in solidarity with the people in our communities that need us most. The Rally has long been a safe space for disenfranchised voices to be heard and that will continue to be the case in 2020. NYC Pride stands with



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Black Lives Matter, and will give focus to the needs of our black and brown brothers and sisters; honoring the lives of those lost to police violence.”

Partners **GLAAD** and **The National LGBTQ Task Force** will speak of the importance of LGBTQIA+ participation in the CENSUS and registering to vote in such a pivotal year.

GLAAD recently launched an action center for voter registration and pledged to show up on Election Day. “Every Pride month we remember that the revolutionary riots at Stonewall in 1969 were spearheaded by many LGBTQ people of color, and that none of the progress made for the acceptance and equality of LGBTQ people over the past 51 years would be possible if not for the action and courage of those protestors,” said **GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis**. “As our community joins together this Pride month to fight back against racism, systemic injustice, anti-LGBTQ discrimination, and police brutality, we must continue the mobilization and momentum leading up to Election Day. This election will determine the future for LGBTQ Americans and other marginalized communities, and we all need to ensure our friends, families, and colleagues vote with the knowledge of all that is at stake.”

“The Census helps LGBTQ communities access billions in federal funding for social programs, helps us build political power, and helps us enforce civil rights protections. While the Census doesn’t ask questions about sexual orientation or gender identity, it’s still vital for us to be counted,” said **Rea Carey, Executive Director of the National LGBTQ Task Force**. “Filling out the Census is a critical component in building our collective power to fight for our rights – including the right to be fully represented in the Census count. Like other marginalized communities, LGBTQ people have historically been undercounted on the Census. The ‘Queer the Census’ campaign is working to change that, so that our community can access the things it needs most – dollars, democracy, and justice.”

The first Rally occurred one month after the Stonewall Riots in June 1969, when 500 people gathered for a “Gay Power” demonstration in Washington Square Park, followed by a candlelight vigil in Sheridan Square. NYC Pride has continued this proud tradition by hosting the event in various locations throughout the city. In its new form, the Rally will also lean on the power of social media to engage with the community starting at 7pm EDT. Follow @NYCPRIDE on Instagram and Twitter to continue the conversation with **Jillian Mercado** from “The L Word: Generation Q” and others.

“This event will serve as a call to action at a point in our history where the future is dependent on effecting change,” said **Matthew Kovalsky**, NYC Pride Rally Director. “I am in awe of our community, and how quickly we came together. This year’s Rally will be unique, engaging and powerful thanks to the leaders, activists and performers who will be joining us.”

The event will also feature performances by **Michael Blume** and more.

Registration for the Rally is now available on EventBrite: <http://nycpriderally2020.eventbrite.com/>

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**ABOUT HERITAGE OF PRIDE** Heritage of Pride, Inc. is the volunteer-directed organization behind the official NYC Pride roster of events. Heritage of Pride's mission is to work toward a future without discrimination where all people have equal rights under the law. We do this by producing LGBTQIA+ Pride events that inspire, educate, commemorate, and celebrate our diverse community.

**GOOD SENSE & COMPANY** is a design and production agency for live and virtual events. They produce large-scale, visionary projects for clients including YouTube, Google, Samsung and the Tribeca Film Festival. In these challenging times, their focus has shifted to producing high-end content and virtual events. The GOOD SENSE VIRTUAL STUDIOS is a digital content lab that merges strategic thinking with fine-tuned creative impulses to create emotionally resonant video content. They believe in event design that has meaning and purpose, and are proud to help amplify the voices of NYC Pride during these challenging times. [goodsense.nyc](http://goodsense.nyc)