

# TCH Participates in Cincinnati Pride Parade for First Time

by Caroline Lembright, Advancement Intern

The annual Cincinnati Pride Parade stepped off June 22 and The Children's Home of Cincinnati was one of many groups that marched through throngs of cheering supporters to the festival at Sawyer Point.

The agency's participation in the parade was spearheaded by Behavioral Health Clinic Therapist Beth Beischel, who attended the LGBTQ competency training at The Children's Home in March. Attending the training encouraged her to take action. "We talked a lot in the training about advocating and being supporting and being openly accepting," she said. "That's why being a visible presence at Pride is important. People in the LGBTQ community can say 'that's The Children's Home and they are supportive and accepting.'"

Pam McKie, chief operating officer of The Children's Home, also participated in the Pride parade. McKie said, "Some

of the greatest inventions of The Children's Home come from the staff. Here again, was another piece we might have otherwise been missing without the help of our staff."

While the Pride festival is a celebration of identity, the

the reason the agency's participation is important is underscored with the many obstacles faced by the LGBTQ community, according to the organization's participants in the event.

"The reality is that the LGBTQ community still experiences a great deal of discrimination, especially children and teenagers," Beischel said. "It's important that we, as a mental health agency who supports families and kids, make it clear that we support all families and kids. Whether it's our clients that identify as LGBTQ, their parents, or a sibling, they should know that our therapists and our staff are safe people to go to."

The participants said they gave out countless high fives, bubbles, and candy, but a greater joy came from seeing the reaction from those familiar with The Children's Home represented at the parade.

"Several different times throughout the parade I would see a teenager or a parent light up when they saw us," said Beischel after the parade's conclusion. "They are connected to us, and the fact that we were in the parade supporting them made them feel seen and filled up. That made me feel like this is something we need to keep doing in the future."

For McKie, our participation in Pride continues to build the legacy of The Children's Home.

"We have a 155 year history," said McKie. "We have said and have proved that we know how to change with the times. We are future focused; if we want to be a 255 year organization, we have to be present in the moment of serving people in our scope and looking to the future. We need to be doing the important things that position us to be a chosen provider."



*Members of The Children's Home staff and senior leadership spearheaded the agency's inaugural participation of the Cincinnati Pride Parade.*