

Honorable Mayor Jeffrey Schielke and Batavia City Council,

As Pride Month comes to a close, we are contacting you to express profound gratitude and appreciation that our City Council has continued to be steadfast in its recognition of Pride Month, including the flag raising ceremony and Pride Month Proclamation.

As stated in a portion of the proclamation, we live in a country founded on the principles that all people are created equal, and the recognition of Pride Month by our city, reflects our town's efforts to more fully realize this promise.

Thank you for naming the Stonewall Uprising specifically, as it honors part of the history of the LGBTQ+ movement, and is the reason Pride Month is commemorated in June. It supports all Batavians in remembering our nation's history, and the efforts it sometimes takes to stand up and resist unjust laws.

Our organization, the Batavia Community Diversity Initiative, is dedicated to creating a sense of belonging for all members of our community through our commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. We understand that by centering the needs and uplifting the voices of the most vulnerable, we all become more free of oppressive systems and ways of thinking. We envision a Batavia that is welcoming and affirming to all - a city that embraces our diverse ways of being and serves the needs of all its citizens, so that all who live here can thrive, grow and prosper.

Therefore, it is necessary to name that the LGBTQ+ community in Batavia advocates for the rights of all Batavians to be fully affirmed in who they are. We should remind ourselves of this often. From local activists like Scott Naylor, board member of Belong: Fox Valley, who host and uplift events for adults and families to attend in our community in safe and affirming spaces; to Annie Hex, local performer, artist, and organizer of such life giving, and life saving events like Queer Art Club and Prom; and Joe Erbentraut, a local DJ and writer, who gifts this community with funny, and also necessarily thought provoking pieces in Queering the Burbs. We are just naming a few of the local organizations and individuals our BCDI has built relationships with, but we know there are so many more in Batavia who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, and we feel pride and privilege to be in a town with them.

When this City Council uplifts Pride Month in our town, it is a significant and necessary statement that Batavia affirms the lives, efforts and humanity of the LGBTQ+ community here, and everywhere.

Thank you! We feel so much PRIDE to call Batavia our home.

Sincerely,

Batavia Community Diversity Leadership Council

-Robert Buckley, Chris Lowe, Marisa Pfautz, and Kathleen Meeks