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EDITORIAL: Southington Pride to hold ‘party with a purpose’

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Southington Pride is the first-ever collection of events that will take place across town at the end of May and start of June with a unifying theme of inclusiveness. It will be held at businesses, churches and civic organizations, and will include a flag raising at the John Weichsel Municipal Center.

Another theme is diversity, as represented by the LGBTQIA+ community. As one organizer described it, it's a "party with a purpose."

As the Record-Journal recently reported, along with the flag raising will be an educational panel discussion held at First Congregational Church and a family fun hour at YMCA Camp Sloper. Events are also being planned for Kinsmen Brewing Company, Plan B restaurant and Foodology cooking school.

If it sounds like the whole town is getting involved, that's precisely the point.

Similar Pride celebrations across the nation typically have included parades, but while that will defer to the coronavirus pandemic there are in-person events allowed by state and federal guidelines.

"There is a need for it and a recognition that as a community this is going to be a wonderful event for people to come together," said Mitchell Oliva, one of the organizers with Southington Pride Inc.

Before things get started, a crosswalk will be painted in rainbow colors by staff and volunteers at Southington Community Cultural Arts. That will be followed by a chalk painting contest outside the doors of the art center at 93 Main St., and an event where families can create their own art work. The center will also have an exhibit of LGBTQIA+ themed artwork by town residents, which will remain on display throughout June. The arts center participation is an example of many events taking place in town.

Southington deserves great credit for this extended event and for how it is all coming together. It can serve as a model for other municipalities to follow and we hope other towns will. Celebrating diversity and inclusiveness makes a pretty good party, after all.

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