



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 8, 2017

CONTACTS:

Payal Patel

(312) 595-5073

ppatel@navypier.com

Lydia Jordan-Parnell

(312) 595-5063

ljordan-parnell@navypier.com

Pier Pride Returns to Chicago's Popular Lakefront Destination

Navy Pier to display AIDS Memorial Quilt and host full day of Pride activities, including Story Time with Drag Queens, Chicago's Big Fat Gay Wedding, disco-themed fireworks and live music performances headlined by local stars, Taylor Bennett and Big Dipper

CHICAGO – The 2nd Annual Pier Pride is set to return to Navy Pier, one of the top nonprofit cultural destinations in the Midwest, on Saturday, June 24 with a full day of Pride activities along the lakefront. Free and open to the public, the family-friendly event is the largest Pride celebration in Chicago outside of the Lakeview neighborhood.

As part of the celebration, Navy Pier looks forward to welcoming back The NAMES Project's AIDS Memorial Quilt. The internationally-renowned quilt, featuring Chicago-centric panels, will once again be on display for public viewing from Saturday, June 17 through Sunday, June 25 in the lower-level corridor below Festival Hall, near Riva Crabhouse. As a special addition to this year's showcase, nearly 50 original and powerful photographs from the inaugural 1988 Quilt exhibit at Navy Pier, captured by photographer Lisa Howe-Ebright, will also be on display for public viewing.

On June 24, Pier Pride will officially kick off at noon with a fitness class at the base of the Wave Wall staircase that connects the South Dock to Pier Park, where the *Centennial Wheel* is located. Fitness Formula Club will lead guests through "The Big Gay Get-In-Shape," a 20-minute high-intensity workout session.

Following the fitness class, children and families are invited to gather at the Wave Wall for Story Time with Drag Queens, presented by Muffy Fishbasket. The drag queens will read various storybooks to children throughout the day and be available for photos with the children and their parents following story time.

Popular local drag queen, "Charlene Unger from Berwyn, Ill.," will emcee the day's program and perform several musical numbers alongside the Ungertones. The Lakeside Pride Marching Band will also be on hand for a live performance and grand parade down the South Dock, while Young Chicago Authors' *Louder Than a Bomb*, the world's largest youth poetry slam competition, will conduct a Pride-themed poetry reading called "Prouder Than a Bomb."

In the evening, social justice educator, diversity professional and international keynote speaker Precious Davis will commence Chicago's Big Fat Gay Wedding, the largest same-sex wedding in the city, as she officiates a series of marriage ceremonies for LGBT couples along the South Dock, against the stunning backdrop of Lake Michigan and the iconic Chicago skyline. Interested couples can bring their marriage certificates and get legally married at the Pier.

Live entertainment will continue throughout the evening at the Miller Lite Beer Garden with a full lineup of local talent, including highly acclaimed DJs, Ron Geronimo and Grammy Award-nominated remixer, composer and producer Ralph Rosario. The program in the Miller Lite Beer Garden will also feature Chicago stars Taylor Bennett, popular hip hop artist and brother of Grammy Award winner Chance The Rapper, and Big Dipper, "the raunchy big boy bear of rap," whose crazy antics and unique performances have landed him as one of "Hip Hop's Queer Pioneers" by DETAILS Magazine.

The festivities will conclude with a special dance performance by samba dancer and instructor Edilson Lima and company, followed by a disco-themed firework show as part of Navy Pier's Aon Summer Fireworks.

"Welcoming people of all backgrounds is at the heart of Navy Pier's mission and values," said Steve Abrams, guest artistic director at Navy Pier. "The annual Pier Pride celebration is an event that embraces the ideals of respect, tolerance, diversity and inclusiveness. Navy Pier is proud to open its doors and welcome individuals from all walks of life to the People's Pier for this much-needed celebration of love."

In addition to the planned events and activities, several tents will line the South Dock with representation from various local organizations, including Century 21 SGR (offering fair housing information), Chicago PrEP Working Group (promoting PrEP4Love), Howard Brown Health Center (providing free HIV screenings), Legacy Project and more. Pier Pride merchandise, including tanks, T-shirts and tote bags, will be available for sale, and free face painting will be offered by Rosa Cline at the tents.

Navy Pier is also set to light certain building assets and attractions, including the iconic *Centennial Wheel*, in rainbow colors in honor of the Pride festivities. Rainbow balloons, pennants and flags will be displayed proudly across the landmark throughout the celebration.

For the full Pier Pride program schedule, see below (subject to change):

TIME	PROGRAM	LOCATION
12 PM	The Big Gay Get-In-Shape	Wave Wall
12:30 PM	Story Time with Drag Queens	Wave Wall
1 PM	Charlene Unger and Ungertones	Wave Wall
1:30 PM	Story Time with Drag Queens	Wave Wall
2 PM	Lakeside Pride Marching Band	Wave Wall
3 PM	Prouder Than a Bomb	Wave Wall
3:30 PM	Charlene Unger	Wave Wall
4 PM	Prouder Than a Bomb	Wave Wall
4:30 PM	Story Time with Drag Queens	Wave Wall
5 PM	Prouder Than a Bomb	Wave Wall
5:30 PM	Chicago's Big Fat Gay Wedding	South Dock
5:30 PM	DJ Ron Geronimo	Miller Lite Beer Garden
6:45 PM	Taylor Bennett	Miller Lite Beer Garden
7 PM	DJ Ralph Rosario	Miller Lite Beer Garden
8:45 PM	Big Dipper	Miller Lite Beer Garden
9 PM	DJ Ralph Rosario	Miller Lite Beer Garden
9:30 PM	Edilson and Samba Dancers	Miller Lite Beer Garden
10:15 PM	Disco Fireworks	Pierwide

Pier Pride is just one of the many examples of Navy Pier's commitment to raising its profile as a nonprofit, with continued focus on offering dynamic and eclectic experiences through partnerships and programs, as outlined in the organization's mission and values. As the *Fifth Third Bank Centennial Celebration* continues in 2017, the Pier looks forward to introducing more exciting and innovative year-round programming for guests to experience and enjoy for free. For more information on this and other special offerings at the Pier, please visit www.navy pier.com.

Navy Pier Mission Statement

Navy Pier is the People's Pier, Chicago's lakefront treasure, welcoming all and offering dynamic and eclectic experiences through partnerships and programs that inspire discovery and wonder.

About Navy Pier

Located on Lake Michigan, Navy Pier is one of the top-attended nonprofit cultural destinations in the Midwest, stretching more than six city blocks and welcoming more than nine million guests annually. Originally opened in 1916 as a shipping and recreation facility, this Chicago landmark showcases more than 50 acres of parks, restaurants, attractions, retail shops, sightseeing and dining cruise boats, exposition facilities and more. In 2017, Navy Pier continues to celebrate its centennial with a series of special events and programming, year-round rides on the *Centennial Wheel* and ongoing pier-wide redevelopment efforts as part of the *Centennial Vision*. Navy Pier, as a nonprofit organization, maintains and manages the 50-acre pier that is being redeveloped as a contemporary, environmentally responsible urban space. More information is available at www.navy pier.com.