**Running with Lavender Bridge in the Rainbow Run**

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Metropolitan State's LGBTQIA student group, Lavender Bridge, was on hand at the Rainbow Run and Pride to support an important message: love always wins. This important directive was felt as I ran with the exuberant crowd.

As an active runner I look for fun 5 and 10K races to run year round. Shorter “fun runs” give opportunity for community involvement. The Rainbow Run is one such race, raising understanding and building stronger ties with the LGBT population. Now more than ever, it is important for us to build love and compassion for everyone in our communities. That is what Twin Cities Pride and the Rainbow Run is all about.

Dressed in their best multicolored regalia, runners lined up on Boom Island—where the electric energy started. As we ran along Hennepin Avenue the excitement built, with the Rainbow Run participants preceding the Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade. Police were directing traffic, cheering runners on, and freely handing out high-fives for willing takers. Spectators cheered as runners and walkers passed along the parade route. It was clear from the large crowd lined up on Hennepin and the massive amount of support that Pride is an important tradition. The message of love at the finish line was clear when I hugged and high-fived strangers who, after the run, felt like friends I've known for years.

The Rainbow Run is an example of a shift in soul in the Twin Cities. In the short period of time since gay marriage legalization, contention towards gay marriage has not been at pre-2012 levels in the media for some time. The run also shows how much work needs to be done. Just the fact that it exists signifies a bittersweet combination: the pride of a minority being able to express themselves is the sweet. The idea that the same minority of LGBTQIA still have a point to prove for a majority in which nuance is often lost on a constant, exhausting edge is somewhat bitter tasting. With proactive organizations like Metro’s Lavender Bridge, the next generation of activists can flourish with deep vigor.

Lavender Bridge was not only involved in the run, but also had a booth at the Pride festival. They are an important group to have on campus to raise understanding and do outreach for the greater community. One of the group’s other events this year was a masquerade ball for LGBTQIA youth. To join Lavender Bridge, see their Orgsync page or contact advisor Saby Labor at [Saby.Labor@metrostate.edu](mailto:Saby.Labor@metrostate.edu).