

# Celebration included booths, live music and drag show

**PRIDEFEST** from page 1A

different political climate than past years, politics took a backseat. The joyous atmosphere was overwhelming: Rainbow pride gear and colorful flags far outweighed any negativity. Kate Henschel, a PrideFest volunteer for four years, said it always feels like a party.

“I think it’s more important than ever just to get out there and say very clearly that everyone is valid and everyone matters,” first-year volunteer Whitney Coffey said.

The outdoor celebration featured 75 booths stretched along Park Avenue in front of Rose Music Hall. Live music kept the event going all afternoon, leading up to a drag show in the evening with Roxxy Andrews, a queen who competed on RuPaul’s Drag Race.

“Seeing a performer who’s so well established — you know, she’s been on TV, she’s done RuPaul’s — she’s an inspiration,” drag queen Madora Khaos said. “Anybody can do it. And I think it’s just really cool we managed to get someone so big in our little hometown show.”

Khaos was one of two other queens who performed in the show. She’s been performing for about a year and spent two weeks preparing her number for PrideFest.

“This is actually one of the busiest prides I’ve seen in the five years I’ve been coming. This is my sixth year, and it’ll be my first time up on stage,” she said. “I’m excited. I think this crowd is going to be great. Everyone’s been like, ‘Hey, you look great!’ People are really, really active and they’re really happy, and it’s good to see.”

Planning for PrideFest has been in the works since January, PrideFest Vice President Amanda Lay said. This year, the organization partnered with The Center Project, a community center that creates events and groups for LGBTQ people.

Hundreds of people had arrived in the first few hours of the festival. Coffey said she met one attendee from South Africa. One couple, Preston and Brad Miller, drove over two hours from Buffalo, Missouri, to celebrate their first anniversary together.

“I’ve noticed a lot of families here,” said Talbert Ford, who came to the festival with the Prime Timers Mid Missouri booth. “With all the turmoil going on today and hate speech and everything, it’s nice to see people unite and come together for a common cause.”

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Will Smith, from Marshall, Missouri, and his horse Walt storm out of the bucking chute during the saddle bronc riding Friday at the Cattlemen Days Rodeo in Ashland.

*Competitors and enthusiasts came from miles around for the Cattlemen Days Rodeo on Friday night in Ashland. Events included saddle bronc riding, bareback riding and trick roping.*

Jack Zara, 4, from Rocheport, attends his second rodeo Friday at the Cattlemen Days Rodeo in Ashland. Jack played with a toy gun and watched the competition with his family.

ELLIE CHERRYHOMES  
MISSOURIAN



ABOVE: Professional cowboys watch fellow competitors while sitting on the bucking chute Friday at Cattlemen Days Rodeo in Ashland. TOP: A rodeo competitor wears a vest embroidered “Lutz” memorializing 19-year-old cowboy Coy Lutz. Lutz died from injuries sustained from a horse at the Cowtown Rodeo in New Jersey last year.

# Fifth annual Pet Expo raises funds to support No Kill Columbia

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Ukko pressed his left paw down on a sheet of white paper, leaving behind a pink paw print. He squirmed a bit as a volunteer painted his right paw purple before letting him stamp down again. After making two more marks — one orange and one blue — Ukko’s masterpiece was finished.

Ukko is a seven-month-old white German shepherd, his owner Adam Dickerson said. Dickerson and his daughter Vivien, 7, brought Ukko to the fifth annual Columbia Pet Expo Saturday to give him a chance to socialize with people and dogs alike.

Puppy Picasso, where Ukko was hard at work painting, was one of several canine-centered activity stations spread across the lawn at Stephens Lake Park for the event, which was sponsored by Treats Unleashed.

Treats Unleashed is a family-owned business that sells homemade treats for pets, made with only the healthiest ingredients, owner Teresa Miller said. Miller started

Treats Unleashed 15 years ago when she realized that the pet foods currently on the market were all made with artificial flavors, colors and preservatives. Miller wanted a healthy alternative.

“We were eating healthy and wanted our pets to be healthy, as well,” she said. The business now has seven locations across Missouri and one in Kansas.

Treats Unleashed has been sponsoring the fundraiser for five years, with all the proceeds going to No Kill Columbia, a nonprofit that works with shelters to end the euthanasia of animals without homes by spaying and neutering animals to reduce overall numbers.

The money raised at the pet expo funds the Spay and Neuter Project, a low-cost clinic where people can get their pets spayed or neutered for a reasonable price.

The more donations No Kill gets, the lower the cost of surgery, No Kill board member Melissa Kron said. Last year the fundraiser brought in around \$4,000, she said.

Another strategy the No



LEFT: Kennedy Gelven, 2, pets greyhound Ooto, 6, at the Columbia Pet Expo on Saturday at Stephens Lake Park in Columbia. RIGHT: Princess, an 18-month-old Pomeranian, sits strapped to her owner Rachelle Miller during the Columbia Pet Expo. Miller goes on bike rides with Princess secured to her body.



Kill movement uses is foster homes. When shelters are full, they look for volunteers to foster animals until they find a permanent home, Second Chance shelter employee Kristin Tosie said.

Tosie herself is a first-time foster parent to Ralphie, a dachshund mix, who was with her at the expo. Ralphie just began his stay with Tosie on Friday, but Tosie expects

she’ll only get to keep him for a few weeks.

“Little dogs go faster than big dogs, and he’s pretty cute,” she said.

In addition to the doggie games being run by Treats Unleashed employees and volunteers, there were also booths set up by various Columbia businesses and animal shelters.

A corgi named Moose

lounged beneath one of the foldout tables as his owners, Nicole Rivera and Jake Thompson, sold handmade dog bandanas. Rivera makes all the bandanas herself, including the one Moose was sporting — a black and gold bandana which Rivera calls the “ZOU” bandana.

Rivera and Thompson’s business is called Royal Collections and was one of two bandana shops present at the event; the other bandana shop was Dash Designs.

Several shelters and rescue groups were also at the expo. Everything Greyt is a group that finds permanent homes for retired Greyhound racing dogs, adoption coordinator Jacque Corona said. Multiple greyhounds relaxed around the tent, but only one was up for adoption: Rocky McBones.

McBones walked around wearing a purple satin vest bearing the words “Available for Adoption.” He only raced for about a year, Corona said.

Dogs weren’t the only animals up for adoption. About an hour after Ukko painted at Puppy Picasso, Vivien was perusing the cats in Boone County Animal Care’s tent while her dad and Ukko waited outside the tent. However, with four dogs, five cats, and three chickens, Vivien has enough pets for the moment, Dickerson said.

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