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**THIRD ANNUAL RAINBOW FUN RUN & WALK TO BE HELD IN WINTERPLACE PARK ON JUNE 1ST, 2019**

The largest celebration of diversity, pride and inclusion on the lower shore is returning and expanding in 2019. Following two successful years, and in order to accommodate increasing interest and growing attendance, the event has been moved to Winterplace Park. The expanded event, scheduled for June 1st, includes both a non-competitive 5k (with optional walk route) and a community fair. The purpose of the event is to show, and build, support for the LGBTQ community. All proceeds from this “fun” raiser will benefit the Lower Shore LGBTQ Coalition, Inc. and Salisbury PFLAG, Inc., two local non-profit organizations that provide education and support for LGBTQ people and their loved ones.

On-site registration begins at 7am and the race/walk begins at 8am. The family-friendly community fair which begins at 9am is open to all and free to attend. The fair includes dignitaries, live performances, food trucks, vendors, corn hole, voter registration, a photo booth, button making, face painting, information tables, and more.

Tickets for the fun run/walk can be purchased in advance online at salisburypflag.eventbee.com for $15 per ticket or $50 for a group of 4 and include a commemorative t-shirt for each participant. Tickets can also be purchased on-site the day of the event for $20.

The Lower Shore LGBTQ Coalition was formed in May 2013 by several local agency workers and Salisbury University students after attending the Annual Conference, “Issues Impacting Mental Health of the LGBT Population”. The conference created an overwhelming awareness regarding the lack of resources and support on the Lower Shore of Maryland and the need to address this concern. The Coalition seeks to improve and preserve the well-being of youth and young adults through support, education, and advocacy. Members include individuals from local core service agencies, health departments, behavioral health agencies, staff and students from local colleges and universities, faith based communities and community members who support the mission and help to deliver a series of trainings and other resources to schools, community organizations, and interested agencies.

PFLAG is the largest Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning/Queer (LGBTQ) ally organization in the nation. Salisbury PFLAG was founded in 2015 and made history in 2018 when it installed the first rainbow crosswalk in the state of Maryland. The crosswalk is located on the three-way intersection of Market Street and Division Street in Salisbury, next to the downtown branch of the Wicomico Public Library. PFLAG envisions a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed inclusive of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. By meeting people where they are and collaborating with others, PFLAG realizes its vision by providing support for families, allies, and people who are LGBTQ; providing education about the unique issues and challenges facing people who are LGBTQ; and providing advocacy in the community to change attitudes and create policies and laws that achieve full equality for people who are LGBTQ. Salisbury PFLAG meetings are open to the public and are held on the second Monday of the month from 6:30 to 8:00pm at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship located on Old Ocean City Road in Salisbury.

The Lower Shore LGBTQ Coalition, Inc. and Salisbury PFLAG, Inc., are pleased to continue their partnership as they come together to reduce intolerance and enhance acceptance of LGBTQ people through the Rainbow Fun Run/Walk and Community Fair. Both organizations share the same important goal of supporting and strengthening the growing adult and youth LGBTQ community here on the Shore. For more information about either organization, please contact Jennifer Riebe, President of the Lower Shore LGBTQ Coalition, at lowershorelgbtq@gmail.com or Shelly Copper, Executive Director of Salisbury PFLAG, at SalisburyPFLAG@outlook.com.