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## **Pune's first Gay Pride parade inspires many people**

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Pune's gay community held its first ever Gay Pride Parade in the city on Sunday. The community has previously hosted other such events. The second annual Queer Fest also took place over the weekend. The theme for this year's Queer Fest is 'Being seen, Being heard.'

The parade is expected to become an annual event and people are already making plans to organise events next year, according to Apphia K, co-founder of Birds of a Feather, a volunteer-based support group. It was created two-and-a-half years ago to support the LGBT community.

Apphia is hoping that next year, a large number of people will participate in the parade. This year, about 50 to 60 people took part in the parade.

"A lot of people were unaware about the event," Apphia said. She herself didn't know that they got the permission to march until three days before the scheduled date. Time constraints for publicising the event and the fact that it was far away for a lot of people hurt the attendance, Apphia said. Still, she said, enough people participated, which shows the parade was a success.

About 200- 250 people showed up at Kala Chhaya on Saturday to participate in the Queer Fest. *Ek Madhavbaug*, a Hindi rendition of a Marathi play by Chetan Datar, was a huge hit. There were also music performances by Alisha Batth and Meera Shenoy. The event was a collaborative effort by Open Space, Birds of a Feather, The Queer Chronicle, Quintessence and many individual donors.

Aditi Dharmadhikari, an intern at Open Space, said more people showed up than expected. "It was a lot more fun than people expected it to be," she said, adding that it was a relaxed, open and fun event.

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