



The Equity Newsletter | June 22, 2022

RECAP: INAUGURAL JUNETEENTH CABLE CAR RIDE



On June 17, staff from across the agency celebrated the launch of the Agency’s first Juneteenth Cable Car in a staff networking ride around the city. As Stephanie Pace, Transportation Safety Specialist, reflected, "Being able to connect with people from different divisions and sections was a great networking experience. It was also an awesome cultural experience given it was the inaugural Juneteenth ride."

Throughout the year, the Office of Racial Equity and Belonging and Transit, Cable Car Division have partnered on a series of Racial Equity-Themed Cable Cars. The Juneteenth Cable Car features a celebratory display of Black liberation movements in the United States. The exhibit uses images, informational text and decorations to provide a history of the holiday.

Special thanks to all staff involved in the decorating planning process for their leadership in designing the exhibit, including Bobby Johnson, Yacine Seck, Jeremy Brooks, Frank Zepeda and the Black and African American Affinity Group!



History of Juneteenth

Juneteenth (short for "June Nineteenth") marks the day when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people be freed. The troops’ arrival came a full two and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running African American holiday. On June 17, 2021, it officially became a federal holiday.



Juneteenth Flag

The Juneteenth flag is a symbol for the Juneteenth holiday in the United States. The first version was created in 1997 by activist Ben Haith and that early version was displayed in 1997. The present version was first flown in the year 2000. The colors and symbols on the flag are representative of freedom and the end of slavery. Unlike other flags which are meant to represent various things, the Juneteenth flag was created for a single holiday.

EQUITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITY: TAKE THE TRANSGENDER 101 ONLINE TRAINING



The Office of Racial Equity and Belonging encourages MTA staff to complete the online training, *Transgender 101: Strengthen Your Commitment to Inclusion*, to learn about what you can do to foster a gender-affirming workplace.

The module, created by the [Office of Transgender Initiatives](#), offers an introduction to transgender and non-binary identities, a critical analysis of best practices around gender pronouns and an overview of the Department of Human Resources Gender Inclusion Policy. It is available to all city employees through SF Learning in the Employee Portal.

[Click here for the detailed instructions for how to access the 'Transgender 101' training in SF Learning.](#)

PEOPLE OF THE SFMTA



Cindy Rodriguez
Project Coordinator
Finance & Information
Technology

What do you love about being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and/or other expansive identities of gender and sexual orientation (LGBTQIA+)?

Being part of a minority group comes with its unique challenges that present themselves in all aspects of my personal and professional life, but what I enjoy the most, despite the ongoing discrimination, harassment, prejudice and violence towards our community, is the resiliency within the community. I admire our strength and our courage to be ourselves even when it is not the most comfortable.

What does it mean to be an LGBTQIA+ professional in transportation?

Working in transportation as a gay woman means advocating toward an agency that is diverse and representative of all the people we serve in San Francisco and from around the world. Most importantly, working in transportation as a minority means striving toward a system where all feel welcome riding Muni with no fear of violence, discrimination or harassment, especially for those in our most vulnerable communities.

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE ON ALLYSHIP FOR TRANSGENDER YOUTH

Credit: Yacine Seck, Student Intern, Streets

"It was obvious that I was going to support her with whatever she wanted to do. But I had to figure out how to do that."

Britt Tanner, SFMTA Traffic Engineer

June is Pride Month, when we celebrate and commemorate the accomplishments of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and/or other identities of the expansive gender and sexual orientation (LGBTQIA+) community. The Office of Racial Equity and Belonging interviewed Britt Tanner, a senior transportation engineer in the Streets Division. She has worked for the SFMTA since starting as a student intern in 2000. Britt spoke of raising her 10-year-old daughter Leah, who was assumed male at birth but made it clear that she was a girl when she was 2 years old.

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE ON ALLYSHIP FOR TRANSGENDER YOUTH

What were your thoughts when Leah came out to you?

"Came out" isn't really the right way to describe it. She would just come over and sit in my lap and say "I'm a girl, call me Elsa!" or "I'm your daughter, call me Anna!". This was when Frozen was all the rage. She also got confused with pronouns and kept calling her teacher "he" even though her teacher was a girl. I'd correct her and say "Rosie's a girl, call her she", and eventually she responded "I'm a girl too, call me "she". So, it wasn't like she came out to me and said, "Mom, I'm transgender" – she had no language like that since she was just three years old!

But it was easy for me to accept that, though "accept" isn't really the right word. I didn't have any thoughts about it. It was just kind of like, "this is what it is". And I had to do a lot of learning. Not so much for myself, because it was obvious that this was just who she was. Everything that I read, they say if your child is "persistent, insistent, and consistent," then you should just listen to them and just follow your child's lead. And they're so young that if you let them make these decisions to socially transition, there's really no harm. Like, it's not like I'm going to go out and have my child start on hormones or have surgery when she's three! She just grows out her hair and wears a different outfit. It's not a big deal to make these changes. But it's hard to explain it to other people, and I thought that I really needed to educate myself and make sure that it was the right thing. Because other people seem to really question it and wonder if it's the right thing. It made me want to be a very strong advocate because immediately I found out that the rates of suicide and depression in trans teens were so high. Like [57% of trans youth that don't have parental support have tried to kill themselves in the past year in this one study I read, but it was 4% for kids who had parental support](#). So, it was obvious that I was going to support her with whatever she wanted to do.

But I had to figure out how to do that. I found a local playgroup for my kid, and it still exists today. For the past few years, I've been helping to run it. It's called [Rainbow Families Bay Area](#), and it's just a place for other parents with trans kids to come and ask questions. For the first year or two, I was spending a lot of mental energy just trying to figure out what was the right thing to do, or what was the new normal. I knew that supporting her was the right thing to do. But I still needed help and reassurance and to hear other people's stories.

What are common misconceptions that people have?

The funniest thing is if I tell someone that Leah is trans now, they get really confused because she presents so much as a girl that they're like, "wait, what do you mean, is she becoming a boy?". They don't understand that I'm saying she was assumed male at birth, but she transitioned to be a girl since she was three. I do remember, however, telling one of my coworkers when my daughter was three that she was trans, and they asked me if she was going to have surgery and I was like, "Are you kidding me? She's three! No. I'm going to let her grow out her hair." But I understand where that question came from, because I didn't know that what it meant to "socially transition" until I met these other families and researched things. Social transitioning is changing your pronouns and your appearance to match the gender that you feel that you are. And that's different from a "medical transition", which is when you would take hormones or maybe have surgery if you wanted to. You don't really *need* to have surgery. For example, there are trans women who choose to not have "bottom surgery" because they don't feel like they need to.

It's really upsetting that there are all these laws happening in other states preventing trans kids like mine from getting basic medical care. Leah's just about to start puberty. And so, for the first time after seven years of living as a girl, we're having to figure out medical interventions. Until now, we haven't had to do anything medically for her; she's grown out her hair, she goes by she/her pronouns, and she presents as a girl. But soon she's going to start on puberty blockers to prevent her from having a testosterone puberty. And after a couple of years on blockers, she'll start on estrogen so that she'll go through an estrogen puberty so that her body will develop into one that she's still comfortable with when she's an adult.

What does allyship mean to you?

I think being an ally is recognizing that someone else is fighting for the same rights that you have, and speaking up for them. One of my pins has the transgender flag and then in the middle, it says, "I'll go with you." It's a campaign that started to say to "I'll make sure trans people feel safe if you're trying to go to the bathroom". There was a study, I think it was in DC, that found that 9% of trans women had been assaulted in bathrooms. (Editor's note: Britt researched the statistic and found out that its much worse – [36% of trans youth have been assaulted in bathrooms!](#)) An ally is someone who will make sure you're safe when you go to the bathroom. Or in our situation, would fight for you to have a gender-neutral bathroom at One South Van Ness, which I think is important but that project has been stalled. Some of our coworkers have a hard time going to the bathroom. Some trans coworkers would go home during their lunch break to go to the bathroom because they did not feel comfortable using a bathroom at work. They got harassed in the bathroom, so we need to be an ally and help support these people - support our coworkers.

CELEBRATE PRIDE MONTH



Join the SFMTA's [Trans March](#) and [San Francisco Pride Parade](#) contingent celebrating "Love Will Keep Us Together."



Trans March

Friday, June 24 | 5 p.m./5:30 p.m.

This year's **Trans March** event takes place **Friday, June 24 at 5:30 p.m.** Anyone participating in the SFMTA contingent aboard the motorized cable car should **plan on gathering at 5 p.m. at 18th and Dolores streets.**

Pride Parade

Sunday, June 26 | 10:30 a.m./11 a.m.

This year's **Pride** event takes place **Sunday, June 26 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.** The parade begins at **10:30 AM** and is estimated to end between 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m..

Join us in the parade contingent by walking, biking or riding in the motorized cable car. You're welcome to bring family members or guests along to join in this fun, inclusive event. Whether you identify as LGBTQIA+ or as an ally, everyone is welcome.

If you are interested in being in the SFMTA parade contingent, please fill out this quick survey:

[SFMTA Pride Parade 2022 Sign-Up](#). Be sure to include:

- **Your name**
- **Division you represent**
- **Cellphone number**
- **Family members who will accompany you:** (Participants are advised of the long wait between report time and parade start)
- **Sizes for SFMTA PRIDE tee-shirts** (M, L, XL, XXL)

More information will be forthcoming. If you have any questions, please contact **Pamela Johnson** at Pamela.Johnson@SFMTA.com.

Participating in one of the world's largest Pride parades is a thrilling and unique experience. We hope you can join us to celebrate San Francisco PRIDE 2022.

CALL FOR SPEAKERS: SHARE YOUR STORY AT *HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY?*

How Do You Identify? is an interactive discussion series focused on connecting staff and fostering a workplace of belonging through conversations about identity and equity. In July, the Office of Racial Equity and Belonging will host the next discussion in commemoration of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Day.

"The anniversary of the passage of the ADA is significant as it is a cumulation of decades of advocacy to ensure that people with disabilities are provided with the civil rights that prohibits discrimination due to their disability and equal access."

Jonathan Chang, Paratransit Planner, Taxis, Access & Mobility Services

If you are interested in being a speaker for the upcoming event, please email equity@sfmta.com and CC Jeremy.Brooks@sfmta.com by **July 15**.

The purpose of this publication is to provide information about ongoing equity work at the SFMTA, including upcoming events, trainings and suggested educational resources.

The Equity Newsletter is published by the
Office of Racial Equity & Belonging: equity@sfmta.com