

# New West stages fifth Pride

## Street party draws thousands

**PRIDE**  
**NATHANIEL CHRISTOPHER**

New Westminster's fifth annual Pride festival drew thousands, with organizers and participants describing the event as the Royal City's biggest and best to date.

The Aug 8 to 16 festival, which included more than 20 events, culminated with a party on Columbia Street, featuring three performance stages and three beer gardens that extended from the bars onto the street. Event organizers estimate that the Aug 16 street party attracted more than 10,000 people, compared to the 1,300 who attended last year's festival.

Between 2010 and 2013, the festival was held at Tipperary Park near New Westminster City Hall.

"We knew we were going to be growing, and the idea was really to give the City of New Westminster and the businesses down here a real opportunity to move and grow with us," says New West Pride board member Shelly Reinhart. "We had people in the city say, 'You know what? I think it's time you move from Tipperary Park where there's more room because you're going to bust out,' and Columbia Street is the perfect place to do it."

The new event, which was free and open, allowed organizers to integrate Pride with Columbia Street businesses and passersby. Tyler James Nicol, man-



Miz Adrien charms a young fan at the New West Pride festival Aug 16.  
NATHANIEL CHRISTOPHER

ager of Gamedeals Video Games, says the event doubled his Saturday sales.

"We've had people of all ages come in, from older gamers to brand new kiddie gamers, who were all just brought down from the Pride party here," he says.

Nicol notes that Gamedeals supports many LGBT and LGBT-inclusive events in the area. "We're really happy to be a part of that community because the nerd community is so vast and you cover all these things, so there's no reason to not include as many people as possible in it."

The Health Initiative for Men

(HIM), which has supported New West Pride since 2010, used the event to spread the word about its new clinic at 40 Begbie Street in New Westminster.

Acting mayor Jonathan Cote, who read the Pride proclamation, thinks the newly expanded celebration represents the best of the city.

"New Westminster has just embraced Pride over the last five years, and the business community and all the residents really become engaged," he says. X

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