

# Celebrating Community with a 4th of July Bang

By Basha Cohen

The annual Highland neighborhood Fourth of July Parade went into hibernation during the pandemic. With the return to “almost normal,” the coveted community parade and family affair returned this year to celebrate our country’s birthday in a socially responsible way. Gone, was the 200-foot-long Little Man Ice Cream sundae that always culminated the celebration, but beloved traditions of a bike decorating pre-party hosted by Mama ‘Hood, balloon arches, festively clad red-white-and-blue locals marching behind the Berkeley Gardens antique fire truck, and the additional starpower of Senior Miss Colorado, Lorie Woltemath, the 96-years-young St. Elizabeth resident, brought heart and soul

back to the streets of the Lower Highlands. The community spirit was palpable as 400 people gathered for opening remarks by Rebecca Williams, a neighborhood mom who jumped into action at the last minute to reignite the parade tradition that began in 2008. Shaina Walsh, a recent North High graduate, expressed gratitude to the community, “I’ve been coming to this parade for as long as I can remember. It has always been my favorite memory of this neighborhood. I’m so grateful to see all of your smiling faces and that we can all be together again after our COVID hiatus last year.” The National Anthem was led by Makenna Sherry to a cheering crowd. As the parade traveled down 32nd Avenue to

Tejon Street, Lorie Woltemath waved at the people lining the streets and porches from her decorated rickshaw. She beamed in her patriotic checked pants and Miss Senior Colorado banner proving that you’re never too old to love a parade. By far the most innovative decoration was a motorized mini truck replete with red, white, & blue fixings and a tail end filled with flying bubbles. At Hirshorn Park families dropped their scooters and bikes and headed for the shade on the sweltering hot day. They were met by our hometown heroes, Denver Fire Department #7, who put on a spectacular waterworks display that had kids (and adults) squealing with joy in a hypersonic hose-

down that brought new meaning to “running through the sprinklers”. After the splash-fest, folks headed to Little Man Ice Cream, which turned 13 on the 4th of July, for a kid-friendly “Happy Birthday Singalong” featuring local North Denver favorite, Hank Williams, Director of Awesomeness, from the Rocky Mountain Aardvarks. Thanks to Rebecca Williams, Highland United Neighborhood Inc (HUNI) and dozens of local businesses, neighbors, and volunteers, The Highland 4th of July Parade ushered in a return to celebrating community and gathering together once again. Well done!



Photos by Basha Cohen

Top to bottom: Row 1: THE BEST DECORATED Motorized Vehicle; Lorie Woltemath, 96-year-young, Miss Senior Colorado leads the parade. She resides in Elizabeth Gardens; Gathering for the National Anthem; Denver Fire Department 7 Meet & Greet...and a sweet splashy treat in store; Denver Fire Department 7 Meet & Greet...puts on a splashy show for the ultimate run through the sprinklers; Denver Fire Department 7 puts on a splashy show for the ultimate run through the sprinklers-The field became a beach for the kiddos; Sisters at the bike decorating station; Doggone good looking patriotic pups; After the parade, Hank Williams of the Rocky Mountain Aardvarks leads a birthday singalong at Little Man Ice Cream to celebrate "The Can's" 13th birthday; Organizer Rebecca Williams and Family enjoys the 13th Birthday singalong at Little Man Ice Cream post-parade; Families gather for a Rocky Mountain Aardvarks singalong at Little Man Ice Cream after the parade; Ready to roll in patriotic red, white & blue; Families gather for a Rocky Mountain Aardvarks singalong at Little Man Ice Cream after the parade.