

***Welcome to the July 2020 Edition of Participate!***

*Join us for Hong Kong 2022 - Gay Games 11!*

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***"We have demonstrated what tolerance and what friendship and what understanding can achieve. This world needs a lot more of that lesson, and we can give it." - Dr Tom Waddell***



Joanie Evans, co-president

The recent events that have led to the Black Lives Matter Movement has made me become more aware of my blackness than I had ever hoped others would be. The struggles I have gone through are now laid bare to the world and I'm scared of what will evolve from all this.

I grew up never wanting my gender or heritage stop me from doing the things I wanted to do, which wasn't easy growing up as the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of the Windrush Migration, but I was lucky to be fully supported by my Jamaican family. I had always wanted to make a difference and this didn't really happen for me until I came out and had a gay platform to perform from.

Coming out as a Lesbian made me feel the most comfortable I'd ever felt in my skin and combining that with my sport of choice, football, was my first time of feeling total belonging. However, as with homophobia, racism is in all areas of our lives and we cannot separate it as long as there continues to be inequality in the world.

Before becoming the first Black Female Co President of the FGG, I used to joke about it happening because I never thought it would. I write this from my council flat in London and my initial experience of FGG was a Board of, mainly, white North American men and little diversity in its members...I didn't see me! When I was asked to apply for the post, I asked if it 'was because I was Black'. I was joking and I knew it would never be the reason I was asked but for me it needed to be 'the reason' because the Board wasn't one that reflected the membership we served. At the Cleveland/Akron Games, I got my 'reason' validated from the many Black participants I met who told me that I had made them feel that they had a place in the Gay Games.

I have never been shy to take up a challenge and I can happily say that the Board has, during my tenure, made great strides to become as diverse as our membership allows and we're ALL aware there is still much to do.

This must not be seen as a moment in time but a time to take action. We must both ensure and enable transformational changes in how we are and in the way we work together for the betterment for all. When we are united we are stronger. This is why our first foray in Asia with the Gay Games 2022 happening in Hong Kong will be seminal. We will continue to deliver our message that our 'Games Can Change the World' by supporting communities everywhere that need a voice, a platform and a home where they feel safe.

#FGG #gaygames. #gaygameshk2022 #gbtq #love

## FGG and BLM

The fight for racial justice is hardly a new concept, as the struggle for basic equality for Black Americans has persisted for 400+ years. In fact, the Gay Games can trace its roots directly to this issue.

October 1968 was near the end of one of the most turbulent years in US history. Just a few months earlier, the country was rocked by the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Presidential candidate Bobby Kennedy, riots outside the Democratic convention in Chicago, numerous demonstrations against the war in Vietnam, and growing unrest over centuries of discrimination against African-Americans. Just nine months later, the watershed Stonewall riots in New York City gave birth to the modern gay rights movement.

October 18, 1968 was day six of the Summer Olympics, being held in Mexico City. That morning, two African-American sprinters – Tommie Smith and John Carlos – won gold and bronze medals in the 200 meter race. Australian Peter Norman won the silver medal.

On their way to the medals podium, Smith and Carlos made a statement: first, they wore green and white buttons which said “Olympic Project for Civil Rights” (they also convinced silver medal-winner Peter Norman (a white Australian) to wear one of those buttons); second, they removed their shoes, wearing black socks to symbolize poverty; third, they wore beads and a scarf to protest lynchings which have historically plagued African-American males; and finally - and most significantly - they each wore a black glove on one hand. Once on the medals podium, they lowered their heads in defiance while the Star Spangled-Banner played and raised their black-gloved fists in a Black Power salute that rocked the world.

Smith and Carlos were widely vilified for their actions, and shortly after the gesture, the U.S. Olympic Committee expelled them from the Olympic Village and sent them home. Even Peter Norman received widespread criticism by conservatives in the Australian media and he was left off the team for the 1972 Olympics

Watching all of this drama unfold was 30-year old white US Olympic teammate, Tom Waddell, a decathlete. Later that week, Waddell placed sixth among the 33 competitors, achieving five personal bests among the ten events.

Unlike many fellow members of the US Olympic team, Tom Waddell spoke openly in support of Tommie Smith and John Carlos. He said, “Black Americans have been discredited by the American flag more often than they have sullied it.”

To those who knew Waddell, this was no surprise. He had always been a vocal supporter of social justice and in 1965 drove from Brooklyn to Selma, Alabama to participate in the Civil Rights Movement there. The next year, Waddell was drafted into the Army; he protested when he found out that he would be shipped to Vietnam. Expecting a court-martial, he was instead, unexpectedly, sent to train as a decathlete for the 1968 Olympics.

Having a front-row seat for one of the most iconic and divisive sports events of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century had a profound impact on Tom Waddell. This experience led directly to his development of the Gay Olympics in 1982 (now called the Gay Games) whose founding tenets are Participation, Inclusion, Personal Best. Had it not been for being an eyewitness to those watershed events in Mexico City, it's quite possible that the Gay Games would have never been created.

At the Gay Games - where we continue to “Change The World” - we strongly believe that #BlackLivesMatter.



### **An interview with one of our newer FGG volunteers, Jamie Hooper**

Jamie – thanks for volunteering with the Federation. Can you tell us a bit about who you are, where you live, what sport/culture you do?

- My name is Jamie Hooper, I live in London (UK), and I play hockey and rugby. I've been volunteering as part of the FGG Diversity and Inclusion committee for the last 6 months.

What attracted you to volunteer for the Federation of Gay Games

- My day job in London is leading on LGBTQ+ and ethnic minority inclusion in sport for Sport England. Linked to the government, we invest lottery money across the country to support the nation to get and stay active. So there was a natural link between my day job to want to support the FGG in their aims to help the Gay Games appeal to a more diverse range of people.

Why do you think this volunteer opportunity is a good match for you?

- We as a Diversity and Inclusion committee are working hard to support the FGG and the Gay Games to become more inclusive and accessible for a diverse global LGBTQ+ audience. This fits really well with the work that I do in my day job, and also as part of another volunteer role I have on the Out For Sport committee in London. OFS is the umbrella organisation looking after all of the LGBTQ+ sport clubs in London and we too are working to support our clubs to welcome more diverse audiences.



What is it like to volunteer with the Federation?

· It's super interesting speaking online with a wide range of different colleagues from around the world, especially now where every country is dealing with the Coronavirus and the Black Lives Matter movement in different ways. We have meetings online every couple of months, and usually chat for a couple of hours. The timing is tricky because we have members in Mexico, USA, Europe, South Africa and Malaysia, so some of us have to be up late, and some very early!

What do you really enjoy about volunteering with the Federation?

· The most exciting thing for me is to be able to work with colleagues all over the world who are all working so hard to make a real difference. We on the D&I committee really want everyone to be able to feel like they can be a part of the Gay Games and have an amazing time when they join in! So it's pretty inspiring to know that our work is hopefully making a difference.

What do you think will change about the Gay Games in the next 5 – 10 years?

· I think we will see a much bigger global movement to support more ethnically diverse people to feel welcomed and supported in sport. We all know that sport tends to be dominated by white Western men, and LGBTQ+ sport around the world is not much different to that. But that needs to change, and we are working hard to be at the front of this movement. I also think we will see stronger global support for trans, non-binary and other gender variant people too. There is a big debate around the world about the inclusion of trans people in sport, and even in wider society, but trans people are ALWAYS welcome in the Gay Games family, and we hope that this will continue to grow.

What would you say to someone who is thinking of volunteering for FGG.....?

· Absolutely go for it!! You will be a part of an amazing global LGBTQ+ family who are working so hard to deliver the biggest LGBTQ+ sporting event on the planet!!

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## Are you inspired by Jamie's story? Would you like to volunteer with the Federation of Gay Games?

We are currently looking for people with skills in social media and people with Graphic Design skills to join us and help get our message out to the widest possible audiences.

### SOCIAL MEDIA VOLUNTEER

Shiv Paul, Officer of Communications is looking for someone to join the Communications Committee and execute the FGG social media strategy. You will:

- Source content from existing mediums as well as your own proven methods
- Work with other FGG committees to ensure their stories and views are incorporated
- Follow a process to organize and disseminate social media content via hootsuite on IG, fb, Twitter and LinkedIn
- Respond to messages in social media platform inboxes

You are organized, responsive, an expert in using and leveraging social media, skilled in outlining processes and in managing multiple requests from many sources, are collaborative and passionate about inclusion. Please be able to dedicate at least 2 hours a week to this.

### GRAPHIC DESIGN VOLUNTEER

Doug Litwin, Officer of Marketing is seeking a graphic designer to assist the FGG with a range of marketing and communications projects. The projects will involve designs for print, web, and social media use. Having some experience with the Gay Games movement would be very helpful but is not essential. If you are interested in either of these volunteering opportunities, please contact the Officer of HR: [viv.woodcock-downey@gaygames.net](mailto:viv.woodcock-downey@gaygames.net) for further information and an application form.

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## FGG Board Vacancies

We are seeking applications for two positions on the FGG Board of Directors. Officer of Diversity & Inclusion, and Officer of Ceremonies.

If you are interested in either of these positions please contact [viv.woodcock-downey@gaygames.net](mailto:viv.woodcock-downey@gaygames.net) for a job description and application form.

- **Officer of Diversity & Inclusion:** Working as an integral part of the Member Services team, you will provide leadership in the development of Federation Diversity & Inclusion policies, practices and activities, and those of Member Organizations and Gay Games Host organizations to ensure the widest representation and to improve the experience of all those who volunteer in or take part in Gay Games events. You will have experience of working/volunteering in a Diversity & Inclusion role together with knowledge of or willingness and capacity to become familiar with successful approaches for improving diversity and inclusion in LGBTQ+ sports and cultural organizations, events and activities. This role is reserved for women and trans/non-binary/intersex applicants.
- **Officer of Ceremonies:** Ceremonies are an important part of our events to create memories that last - from the Memorial Moment at the AGA to the Opening or Closing Ceremonies at the Gay Games. The Production Team is looking for an Officer of Ceremonies to plan and prepare them with the local teams and ensure they follow the well established rules. If you have experience in organizing events and handling multiple and competing requirements from hosts to venues and guests professionally, we are looking for you! This role is open to all applicants.

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**GGHK Update****Order the official Gay Games 11 Hong Kong 2022 t-shirts now!**

The online merchandise store for Gay Games 11 is now open! The first items available are unisex official GGHK2022 t-shirts and tank tops. More items will be added as soon as our designers are ready!

Everything is designed with love in-house, and we have partnered with NUM, for production, sales, and shipping.

Get the official GGHK2022 merchandise now. For these t-shirts and tank tops, shipping is free and we ship all around the world!

Visit the store at <https://gghk2022.com/the-store/>



## Meet GGHK Team Members



### Meet the GGHK Team : John Collingwood-Smith, Director of Ceremonies

From an early age theatre and the arts have played a central role in my life, I've always felt privileged to be part of a community that connected me with people from all walks of life and backgrounds.

Making new friends and connections is important for us all and, from the outset, the passion and enthusiasm of the team pulling together Gay Games Hong Kong has been inspirational.

I'm thrilled to be part of this exciting program which has led me to an empathetic revelation for each person's life story. I feel confident the plans, values and vision for the games will bring participants to a place where they can be heard and recognised.

Hong Kong is excited to welcome the LGBT World Community to our city and our promise is to deliver a Gay Games experience that will continue to have a positive and uplifting influence in your life long after you return home.

The Opening and Closing Ceremonies provide the perfect platform to shape stories that will resonate and play a role in the bigger picture for the future.

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### Meet the GGHK Team : Charlz Trevor Ng, Director of Festival Village

I saw Dennis (*Co-chair*) posting about it online back in 2016 looking for help to curate the bid book. I was immediately drawn to it given its reputation of the world's biggest LGBTQ Sports and Cultural event, and after hearing how events like this can help to encourage more people to be their true self I decided to reach out to Dennis, Co Chair Gay Games 11 Hong Kong 2022 to offer my support.

A part of me has always wanted to do something to help but didn't know where to start, until I heard about the Gay Games. That's when I thought..."this is the time to make an impact."

My background comes from events, from attending to organising, I have always loved bringing people together and delivering quality experiences. However, Hong Kong doesn't really have a lot of places, safe havens if you may, for our community to connect and find acceptance. When people gather, it's usually about parties, glitter, sometimes drag queens. These are all important parts of our community, but I felt there could be even more.

While these are great there isn't a true means of inclusion between the allies and us. What resonates me the most is Gay Games' core principles: "Participation, Inclusion, and Personal Best™", it brings together people from all over the world, with diversity, respect, equality, solidarity, and sharing. Hong Kong is one of the most diverse cities in the world but we lack communities, initiatives, and resources to promote and penetrate LGBTQ equality across the city. There I thought, if we win the bid as the next host city, this will be an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity where I can apply what I do best to create that impact I have always wanted to create. There are literally no reasons why I should NOT join the team. I want to share my story, tell people what my identity means to me, and let those who are struggling to know that they are not alone. It is the first step to changing the hearts and minds of those not yet on board with LGBTQ acceptance.

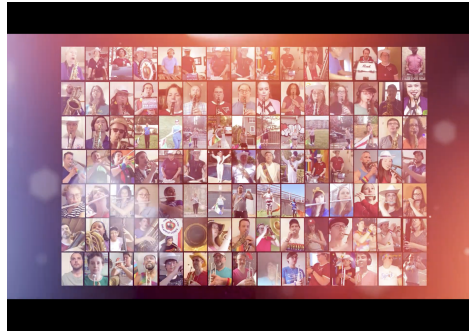
I co-founded an event and marketing agency named Hybrid Group with focus in the fitness and wellness space. We organise a few events such as IRIS: Your Escape which is a local Fitness & Wellness Festival, and Spartan Race, an obstacle course challenge. Both events together attract 60,000 attendees in total and take place twice a year. We also help other companies to create both online and offline marketing campaigns. On the side, I have a boutique gym in Sheung Wan called House Of Fitness which I train 2-3 times a week there, and I have started practicing yoga as my new year's resolution (in 2020) and have been going on average 3-4 times a week.

What excites me about Hong Kong is the eagerness to change and to become better is almost a life-goal for everyone here. The citizens will get behind you if you are promoting something worthwhile, and I am most excited for how the Games will only mark the beginning of the largest LGBTQ revolution in the history of this urban jungle.

## Culture and Ceremonies

The LGBT Bands in San Francisco and Portland, Oregon are collaborating on a shelter-in-place video involving 60 members playing the Sousa march “[Hands Across The Sea.](#)”

There is also a great virtual video performance by theThe Lesbian & Gay Big Apple Corps Band in NYC at this [link](#)



## Membership

**FEATURED MEMBER : Vorspiel SSL Berlin e.V, Germany.**



VORSPIEL, one of Europe’s largest LGBTIQ sports clubs has dealt with the pandemic by keeping their members active online.

Less than 2 weeks after the lockdown, the trainer of ‘Functional Training’ produced an online workout



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 livestream. Several other trainers followed quickly, offering online yoga, General Fitness and even dry Swimming for home training.

At present our members can choose between 10 courses Monday through Friday via Zoom, Facebook and Google. Now that the lockdown restrictions are gradually lifted the VORSPIEL board is working on a strategy to get back to some kind of group training at regular sport facilities.

Since training mostly takes place in municipal gyms and pools the board works in close cooperation with city authorities.

There is light at the end of the tunnel. Despite the regrets that we cannot come together with our friends from all over the world this year VORSPIEL and its members are looking forward to a new 'normal' in terms of sports.

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## External Affairs

### Seeking those with knowledge of early Gay Games History

This is a shout out for Maria of KCSF Radio, San Francisco who is looking for people with historical knowledge of the Gay Games. Maria says:

*"Hello! I am Radio Station Manager at the KCSF City College Radio Station and also Magdalena Soul Radio Station, both in San Francisco. I am preparing a live radio broadcast on the Gay Games focusing on the early history. I would love to get as much original information about your experience with Gay Games in general, especially Gay Games I and II.*

You may check out my credentials at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/kcsf-radio>

*This is for educational purposes only. I am a bisexual female who came out in 1982 and went to Gay Games I in San Francisco. This is a special, personal project for me. Feel free to contact me at any time with questions or your input: [mcrispi@mail.ccsf.edu](mailto:mcrispi@mail.ccsf.edu)."*

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## Domains With Diversity

If taking your team or organization to the next level in 2020 includes reaching and speaking directly to LGBTQ+ athletes and cultural participants, then opportunity awaits in the .LGBT (dot LGBT) community where great domain names are available to add value and visibility for your business – all at a special Gay Games discounted price.

.LGBT domain names are transforming the future of the Internet and raising awareness for the community around the world. Whether part of a niche approach to your overall outreach targeting LGBTQ+ athletes, or a new online home that celebrates your solidarity with the community, .LGBT domains are community, commerce & activism rolled into one.

With every great initiative comes great partners, and PrideLife has welcomed the Federation of Gay Games as a Founding Partner to support leadership in LGBTQ+ sports and culture.

FGG members receive a 30% discount on new .LGBT domain names when purchased at [www.getPrideLife.LGBT](http://www.getPrideLife.LGBT). Simply enter the coupon code FGG2020 at checkout. Offer available through July 31, 2020.

Committed to a mandate of advancing diversity on the Internet, the mission of PrideLife is to promote a more diverse domain name eco-system and develop solutions for driving visibility and differentiation within diverse segments.





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## A Chat with Martin Brophy, MBE



*Our VP of Operations, Viv Woodcock-Downey asked Martin Brophy a Board Member of Legato, the European Association of LGBTQ+ Choirs, how he got into singing and about his most memorable cultural participation moments.*

"28 years ago I joined the London Gay Men's Chorus, LGMC. I quickly realised I had found something that made me feel great, fed my soul and through which I have made great friends all over the world. I'm not a shy, retiring type but singing enables me to feel connected. As a choir you become one body of song, each of you unique but working in harmony to sing beautiful music. I loved it and was soon helping out at gigs and behind the scenes.

One of my favourite and most memorable gigs was singing in the Sydney Opera House at the Gay Games VI in 2002. 60 of us in all black outfits with our white logo, donned our white gloves as we sang Kylie's "Can't get you out of my head". A fully choreographed number with complex hand movements, ultraviolet lighting. My love affair with audiences all over the world had reached a highlight. My passion has taken me to [10 Downing Street](#) and Buckingham Palace where I received an honour from the Queen.

My latest project, The European Queer Choir, EQC, was born in 2011. I wanted to get a group of Europeans together to sing at the quad-annual Gala Choruses festival, Denver, USA, the biggest choral festival in the world with choirs from all over. Together with my friend, Aneesa Chaudhry, a musical Director, MD, and performer based in Brighton, we advertised through our networks and told people about our vision of this wonderful opportunity which came to life before our eyes.

Lines were learnt, notes were bashed, costumes packed and we arrived in Denver. We went down a storm at our first performance and after a few more gigs we were asked to perform "Imagine" by John Lennon at the closing ceremony for the 6,000 audience members.

We enjoyed the EQC experience so much we made it a permanent choir of 25 singers and now have our new MD, Ian Akroyd. We rehearse online and in person and perform in different cities around Europe 2 or 3 times a year. The global pandemic has been difficult but we have maintained a connection by singing online.

Singing is a wonderful enriching experience for everyone which is why the cultural element of the Gay Games is such an important complement to the sporting aspect. Everyone knows how to sing - they just think they can't until they get a few drinks or get into a hot shower alone. So whether it's Pavarotti or Lady Gaga feed your soul and be brilliant. Sing when you can or even join a choir. With over 650 choirs across





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**Share your stories of Participation, Inclusion and Personal Best™ with the hashtag #gaygames**

Since the first Gay Games in 1982, the Federation of Gay Games mission promotes equality in and through sport and culture and ensures that the Gay Games, the world's largest sports and culture festival open to all, take place every four years under the founding principles of *Participation, Inclusion, and Personal Best™*.

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