

Dear Maria Rizzo,

I am emailing you today to express the importance of acknowledging June as Pride month and flying the Pride flag.

High School is already an incredibly judgemental environment. Students are constantly under pressure from peers, from their families and from themselves to be whom they believe they are required to be. These years are some of the most formidable years for adolescence where they are the most impressionable and delicate. To thrust them in an environment that has condemned them for things they cannot change instills fear in their everyday lives. It is documented that LGBTQ youths are more susceptible to bullying, violence, and discrimination. It's documented that queer youth experience higher rates of mental illness and suicides.

Flying the Pride flag won't change *everything*, but **denying** to acknowledge a community that lives in **fear** and is **suffering** under your roof's won't change *anything*.

The Catholic religion claims to be rooted in LOVE. I hope you can prove this to be true.

Thank you for your time,
Marissa Bondi
(alumni of Cardinal Carter Academy of the Arts)