

March 11, 2013

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ATHEIST GROUP DENIED PARTICIPATION IN KANSAS CITY PARADE**

KANSAS CITY, MO -- A local non-profit, the Kansas City Atheist Coalition, was denied participation in the Kansas City St. Patrick's Day Parade this week because, according to an email from parade organizers, "We are an Irish Catholic parade."

The parade website, however, specifies that parade events are "open to all, Irish or not, Catholic or not."

Participants in last year's parade included the Kansas City Sheltie Rescue, an animal-rescue group; The Renaissance Festival; Bob Hamilton Plumbing; and Pepsi Beverage, all secular organizations.

"There have been and are multiple organizations participating in the parade who do not explicitly line up with Catholic beliefs -- the International House of Prayer and K-Love Radio being prime examples in the past," said Sarah Hargreaves, president of the Kansas City Atheist Coalition. "The fact that religious alignment with Catholicism has not been a criteria in the past seems discordant with this sudden new requirement."

Josh Hyde, KCAC's vice president, said that while the atheist group recognizes the importance of a private organization being able to set the rules for its own events, "It's unfortunate that something that is so publicly perceived as a community event would choose to exclude members of the community for the simple fact that they have no religious belief."

The Kansas City St. Patrick's Day Parade is an annual tradition in Kansas City, incorporating many local businesses and organizations of different backgrounds to show pride in Kansas City's community and its people.

"We just want to be treated the same as everyone else," Hargreaves added. "As active and contributing members to the Kansas City community -- through support of local community

programs such as Harvesters, Kansas City AIDS Walk and Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association -- we feel we've earned a place alongside our fellow community members to show our pride in Kansas City."

For more information, contact Kansas City Atheist Coalition President Sarah Hargreaves at 816-726-2577, Vice President Josh Hyde at 913-424-3677 or [contact@kcatheists.org](mailto:contact@kcatheists.org). Visit the group's website at [kcatheists.org](http://kcatheists.org).

The Kansas City Atheist Coalition is a 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable organization. Our mission is to advance atheism through activism, philanthropy, education and the cultivation of a positive secular community.

Keywords: atheism, Kansas City Atheist Coalition, St. Patrick's Day, Kansas City St. Patrick's Day Parade

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