



PHOTO BY MAXX HARVEY

Participants show some skin in support of the Go Topless rally in downtown Asheville.

Go Topless rally represents a fight for women's equality

PEYTON RODGERS

Opinion Staff Writer
prodgers@unca.edu

The future of women continues to grow. The people of Asheville helped make an impact when they gathered together in Pack Square on Women's Equality Day for the ninth annual Go Topless rally.

I am a supporter of the rally because it was created not only for the right of both men and women to go bare-chested in public places, but for all around equality between men and women.

The women who came out to the rally were fighting to end wage gaps, gain better maternity leave and protest the simple fact that a woman can't walk around topless in public places, but a man can.

LaDonna Allison, planner and spokesperson in Asheville for the Go Topless rally, organized the event in order to educate women on their

rights.

"This rally is about being treated equally as a woman," Allison said.

Allison wants to stop double standards between men and women and believes the Go Topless rally offers a great step in that direction. She hopes women will become more comfortable with themselves and become more confident.

Allison wants women to feel more liberated and to gain the freedom to make their own choices, no matter the circumstance.

A misunderstanding many people get from the rally is that the supporters are forcing women to be topless, but Allison stressed to everyone who attended, that the message is more than that. The message is not saying a woman has to face the world topless but is allowing her to have the choice if she desires to do so.

Not all participants chose to be topless. Both men and women chose to stand by the topless women with pride, speak on behalf of all supporters who could not make it and come together as a community, which in itself is liberating.

Joyce Davis traveled from South Carolina to participate in the rally for her fifth year. "I just think that we should have equal rights as a man," Davis said.

Public breastfeeding remains a controversial topic, but Davis supports it and believes women should be allowed to breastfeed in all locations without feeling ashamed.

Children held the hands of their mothers who stood for their rights and beliefs. This allows children to not only learn the importance of acceptance through witnessing all types of women standing together for the same cause

but, teaches them to not sexualize a woman just because her breasts are exposed.

Jamie Bratcher attended the rally with her son and daughter by her side. "Women's bodies are often seen as objects," Bratcher said.

Bratcher hopes for the normalization of women's breasts in public places, and supports the rally for all the women who feel frightened and sexualized.

By participating in the rally, Bratcher hopes for a safer environment for kids, transgender people and women.

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Although the rally brought lots of women together empowering each other, it also attracted lots of gawkers, who stared at women's chests

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23