

The Conservatory to Host 4/20 Event to Celebrate and Benefit Last Prisoner Project

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - For Taralei Griffin, April 20 is a holiday to celebrate the use of legal cannabis. But she can't celebrate without remembering the 40,000 people in the U.S. who are currently incarcerated for nonviolent cannabis crimes.

Griffin has decided to host a party and fundraiser to benefit the Last Prisoner Project, an organization that advocates for those who have been incarcerated for cannabis crimes. On Saturday, April 20, 2024, community members are invited to join in at The Conservatory to have fun while helping out.

“It’s been so interesting seeing more and more states legalize in some fashion and knowing how much it helps me and other people medicinally and how much safer than most things it is recreationally, and then also knowing that so many people,” Griffin said. “It’s something that I’m very passionate about...My focus is doing media, educating people on it, showing that it can be healing as well as fun.”

The event, titled “Fairy Herbmother Presents: Get Loud,” is completely free, though donations to the Last Prisoner Project are encouraged. There will be raffle items available from local head shops and businesses; proceeds from the raffle will go to the organization. Midnight Topher’s Pizza will be “slinging slices” throughout the night, Griffin added, and \$1 from each sale will be donated.

Doors open at 6 p.m., and music begins at 7 p.m. with The Chimney Birds, followed by Hellbender, Lyght Strife and Biff Knarly. DJ CBS will round out the night. Griffin expects the event to end by midnight, though she said they will keep going “if the vibes are good.”

While the Get Loud event promises to be fun, Griffin doesn’t want to lose sight of the night’s cause. The Last Prisoner Project helps people get their charges dropped, which Griffin said is a “prohibitively complicated and long process.” They also provide support and resources. You can learn more at LastPrisonerProject.org.

“We still have people in Illinois getting arrested and spending a long time in prison for cannabis, for a plant that is fully legal here,” explained Griffin, who has been using cannabis since she was 25.

Griffin is also working on a project to highlight local cannabis users, which she hopes will help destigmatize cannabis use. She plans to share these images at the Get Loud event. She originally planned to do a slightly different photography project, but she found that many people were hesitant to model because they were worried about the repercussions of revealing they use cannabis. This, Griffin said, is an example of the stigma and criminalization she is trying to fight through her art and the Get Loud event.

Griffin hopes many people will come out to enjoy the 4/20 party and fundraiser. She promises good music and fun for all.

“Look, I’m really hyping this up,” Griffin added. “I’m very excited about this show. I’ve never organized an event like this, so I’m very proud that it’s coming together. I’ve done a lot of different activism and fundraising things, but I’ve never done an event like this. So I’m very proud. Please show up and make this a great event.”

For more information about the “Fairy Herbmother Presents: Get Loud” fundraiser, visit the [official Facebook event page](#) or stop by The Conservatory on April 20, 2024.