

The Official

# COME OUT

ST. PETE  
Guide 2021



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## COME OUT

ST. PETE

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31**  
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# Contents

7 // Letter from  
Come Out St. Pete

9 // City of St.  
Petersburg Proclamation

11 // Letter from  
St. Petersburg Mayor  
Rick Kriseman

13 // Letter from  
U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist

19 // Event Listing

21 // Business Listings

22 // Thank You,  
Sponsors!

# COME OUT

ST. PETE

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Come OUT St. Pete's mission is to advocate for community awareness and acceptance of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

## COSP 2021 Board Members

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# As You Are

## The History of National Coming Out Day

RYAN WILLIAMS-JENT

**T**he LGBTQ community and its allies began celebrating National Coming Out Day (NCOD) more than 30 years ago, on the one-year mark of 1987's historical National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Washington, D.C. Believing the personal is political, founding activists Robert Eichberg and Jean O'Leary sought to unite their community by positively raising awareness for LGBTQ civil rights as they celebrated authenticity.

"Most people think they don't know anyone gay or lesbian, and in fact, everybody does," Eichberg later reflected. "It is imperative that we come out and let people know who we are and disabuse them of their fears and stereotypes."

In 1988, the first NCOD was celebrated in 18 states, expanding nationwide to all 50 and even seven other countries by 1990. It was then that organizers partnered with the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBTQ civil rights group, to reach more people than ever before.

"We first observed National Coming Out Day as a reminder that one of our most basic tools is the power of coming out," they share ahead of each Oct. 11 commemoration. "One out of every two Americans has someone close to them who is gay or lesbian. For transgender people, that number is only one in 10.

"Coming out – whether it is as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer – STILL MATTERS," the organization continues. "When people know someone who is LGBTQ, they are far more likely to support equality under

the law. Beyond that, our stories can be powerful to each other."

It's important to remember that everyone has the right to decide for themselves if, how and when they come out, which doesn't only happen once. It can be an ongoing process for many in the LGBTQ community.

Whatever your age, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and much more, there's a community waiting to welcome you whenever you're ready. Come OUT St. Pete celebrates you for who you are on this and every NCOD.



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# COME OUT

## ST. PETE

Come Out St. Pete is celebrating its fifth year and continues to find new ways to reach the LGBTQ+ community, carrying on its spirit to honor National Coming Out Day every October.

With a newly established mission and vision this year, our Board of Directors has sought opportunities to broaden our engagement, build strong partnerships and give back to the community. The past year has been one of discovery and growth.

In supporting organizations such as Diversity Arts and the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum, we are working towards our objective to diversify our outreach and positively impact

people who may not have been reached before.

We are extremely proud of the progress we've made over the last 12 months and are looking forward to celebrating with you this October!

Our annual celebration will take on a new look this year in a brand-new collaboration with the Grand Central District and Car Free St. Pete on Oct. 31 as a part of Halloween on Central. You also won't

want to miss another big event in December, ArtVenture, or our second annual coat and toy drive! Follow us on Facebook to stay in-the-know.

We will continue to pursue our mission and welcome you to join us by celebrating your individuality, intersectionality and everything that makes you... YOU! Come OUT and celebrate with us. We look forward to seeing you!

**SINCERELY,  
CHRIS JONES, COME OUT ST. PETE CHAIR  
BILL KODY AND JESSIE WILDER, CO-CHAIRS**



*Chris Jones, Chair*



*Bill Kody, Co-Chair*



*Jessie Wilder, Co-Chair*

# Diversity makes for a better cocktail party.



Today and every day, Tito's Handmade Vodka sends love and goodness by supporting the LGBTQ+ communities and nonprofits dedicated to raising spirits, celebrating pride, and sharing never-ending messages of love.

To get involved and learn more, visit [lovetitos.com](https://lovetitos.com)

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**Coming OUT With A New Name!**

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# Proclamation

CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG

Rick Kriseman, Mayor

**WHEREAS**, National Coming Out Day was founded on October 11, 1988 by Robert Eichsberg and Jean O'Leary marking the anniversary of the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights; and

**WHEREAS**, Come OUT St Pete was formed in 2017 to celebrate this annual event locally; and

**WHEREAS**, St. Petersburg and the surrounding Tampa Bay communities have continued to be a destination for LGBTQ+ people to Live, Work, and Play; and

**WHEREAS**, The LGBTQ+ community adds to the unique fabric of St. Petersburg, creating diversity in neighborhoods, arts, cultural opportunities, and more; and

**WHEREAS**, The Grand Central District has one of the largest concentrations of LGBTQ+ owned or managed businesses in the country; and

**WHEREAS**, St. Petersburg aims to be a welcoming and safe place to members of the transgender community despite the nationwide rise in egregious hate crimes and murders of trans people.

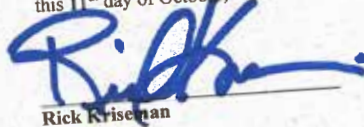
**NOW, THEREFORE, I, Rick Kriseman**, Mayor of the City of St. Petersburg, Florida, do hereby proclaim October 11, 2021 as

## COME OUT ST. PETE DAY

in St. Petersburg and urge citizens to show support and acceptance of each other on this and every day.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official Seal of the City of St. Petersburg, County of Pinellas, and State of Florida to be affixed this 11<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2021.



Rick Kriseman  
Mayor



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Welcome to this year's "Come Out St Pete" celebration. Like the "National Come Out Day" on October 11th, Come Out St. Pete looks to raise awareness and advocate for equity and justice for the LGBTQ+ community by celebrating the achievements within the LGBTQ community and the Grand Central District's long LGBTQ+ history.

While many organizations are finding new ways to gather in large numbers safely, we also celebrate the organizations that continue to adapt and adjust in the face of this ongoing pandemic. This year, the Come Out St. Pete celebration returns stronger and better. I am excited to see the curated collections of LGBTQ+/Ally vendors and entertainers expected throughout the Grand Central District for a self-guided community experience.

I encourage you to enjoy the celebration, enjoy a delicious meal at one of our Grand Central District restaurants, or downtown at the St. Pete Pier. Take time to soak in all that makes the Sunshine City such a wonderful place to live, work, and play. St. Pete consistently ranks among the top cities for LGBTQ+ people to live and visit. We remain proud to be one of America's most LGBTQ-friendly destinations that have again earned a perfect 100 score in the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index. While this will be my last "Come Out St Pete" as the mayor of St. Petersburg, I will never stop working to ensure our community is open to you and embraces you (even through social distancing and face masks).

Thank you again for choosing St. Petersburg, and have a great time!

Sincerely,

  
Mayor Rick Kriseman



Lindsey Sheppy  
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Ainsley MacDonald Smith  
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Robert W. Pope  
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Come Out St. Pete  
 2529 Central Ave.  
 St. Petersburg, FL 33712

October 11, 2021

Dear Friends at Come Out St. Pete,

I write to you in celebration of Come Out St. Pete as we celebrate National Coming Out Day on October 11, 2021.

We are living through a period in our nation's history unlike any other, when the impacts of COVID-19 have isolated us from the friends, neighbors, and the community we depend on during times of crisis. Attacks from state governments across the country on our trans friends and reproductive rights have sown fear and distrust in our communities, leaving many unsure where to turn for help. Now more than ever, the Come Out St. Pete Festival is an important source of connection for vulnerable members of the LGBTQ community in our city, who may be separated from the friends, colleagues, or other members of their 'chosen family' who have provided them support when their immediate family would not.

This festival and its message of self-acceptance, freedom of expression, and love are a light at the end of an often dark and difficult tunnel. I applaud the organizers of Come Out St. Pete for adapting during difficult circumstances so this powerful celebration of our LGBTQ community may go forward safely.

I appreciate and commend the efforts of Come Out St. Pete for creating a space of acceptance, tolerance, and love precisely when we need it most.

Sincerely,



Charlie Crist  
 United States Congressman (FL-13)

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Thursday : Drag Trivia at 7pm

Friday : Dj at 7pm, \$3 sky vodka, \$3 Fireball after 7pm

Saturday & Sunday : unlimited Bloody Marys and Mimosas  
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Sasha & Andrew Citino

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ST. PETE



# OUT and Proud

Come Out St. Pete celebrates YOU year-round

RYAN WILLIAMS-JENT

**C**ome OUT St. Pete (COSP) has advocated for the acceptance of every sexual orientation and gender identity since 2017, encouraging a sense of community by promoting equality for all.

“Our mission is to serve the Tampa Bay community by providing activities and events that raise awareness and advocate for equity and justice for the LGBTQ+ community,” COSP advises. They do so by celebrating the achievements of LGBTQ individuals while offering support, guidance and resources to the community and its allies.

Following 2020’s reimagined celebration, organizers worked diligently to continue bringing people together however possible, always with the safety of those they serve in mind.

That’s because COSP “envisions a world unified around a culture of hearts and minds that value freedom of expression, acceptance, love and

equality for all LGBTQ+ people,” the nonprofit shares.

That was evident in the months leading up to National Coming Out Day 2021. In April, COSP began sponsoring T-Dances at The Garage on Central Ave., which marked its 10th anniversary in the Grand Central District this year.

The gatherings continue today and reinforce COSP’s mission with performances from its Royal Court, ambassadors who represent the nonprofit each season. It began with the inaugural winners of 2020 – drag queen and transgender entertainer Stephanie Stuart, nonbinary entertainer Kristina White and drag king Joanie Werner.

In June, COSP partnered with the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum to host a rainbow flag unfurling at the latter’s Black Lives Matter street mural. Its latest “Together We Rise” event – designed to unite the LGBTQ and African American communities – was held in honor of Juneteenth, the federal holiday which marks the emancipation of those who were enslaved in the U.S.

More than 100 volunteers held COSP’s 375-foot flag in solidarity. Tampa Bay entertainer Kori Stevens also altered it this year to transform it into a Progress Pride Flag.

The design expands on the traditional Pride flag’s red, orange,



Mr. Sun's

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►► | **Out and Proud**  
FROM PG.21

yellow, green, blue and violet to include black, brown, white, pink and light blue. The colors represent the most marginalized members of the LGBTQ community, people of color and those who are transgender.

In addition to holding events for Pride Month like an Out and Proud 365 Block Party, COSP maintained its monthly T-Dances, hosted the bullpen at Tropicana Field for the Tampa Bay Rays' Pride Night in August and crowned its new Royal Court in September. Stuart, Werner and White stepped down to make room for this year's representatives.

Alexis De La Mer now represents COSP's drag queen division, James Cass represents its trans masculine division and Russell Mania represents its nonbinary division. Each is eager to serve Tampa Bay's community in their new roles.

From National Coming Out Day 2021 to a spooktacular Halloween celebration and well beyond, COSP's community outreach is just getting started. All that's missing is you!



**TOP RIGHT**

**NEW REPRESENTATION:**

(L-R) James Cass, Alexis De La Mer and Russell Mania step into their new roles Sept. 5, 2021 at Enigma St. Pete.

PHOTO BY DYLAN TODD

**MIDDLE LEFT**

**ROYAL T:**

2020's Royal Court lead a T-Dance at the Garage on Central Ave. May 2, 2021.

PHOTO COURTESY COME OUT ST. PETE

**MIDDLE RIGHT**

**STEPPING DOWN:**

(L-R) Stephanie Stuart, Kristina White and Joanie Werner crown their successors at Enigma St. Pete Sept. 5, 2021.

PHOTO BY DYLAN TODD

**BOTTOM RIGHT**

**PLAY BALL:**

COSP hosts the bullpen during the Tampa Bay Rays' annual Pride Night at Tropicana Field on Aug. 20, 2021.

PHOTO BY DYLAN TODD





D

Today  
I Marry My  
Best Friend,  
the one I  
Laugh with,  
Dream with,  
Pray For,  
**LOVE**

*As two families  
will become  
one in just a  
short while,  
we ask that  
you take a seat  
on either side  
of the aisle.*



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# Events

## COME OUT ST. PETE T-DANCES

**Every 1st and 3rd Sunday**  
**The Garage on Central Ave. | 4-9 p.m.**

*Come Out St. Pete sponsors T-Dances at the Garage, featuring vendors, raffles and OUTstanding performances from 2021's Royal Court! Alexis De La Mer represents COSP's drag queen division, James Cass represents our trans masculine division and Russell Mania represents our nonbinary division.*

## COME OUT CRUISE AROUND

**Oct. 16 | Gulfport and St. Petersburg**

*Decorate your vehicle and show your Pride, driving slowly and safely around St. Petersburg and Gulfport.  
Learn more at [ComeOutStPete.org](http://ComeOutStPete.org)!*

## WEST END GHOUL-FEST

**Oct. 31, Halloween**  
**2600-3100 Central Ave., St. Petersburg | 12-5 p.m.**

*This year our main festivities will be celebrated a little differently as we take part in Halloween on Central, a collaborative initiative with Car Free St. Pete and the Grand Central and Edge districts. Two miles of Central Ave. will be closed from 9th street to 31st St. and will host many events! We are responsible for the five-block span of the 2600 block to the 3100 block, which will feature vendors and entertainers assembled to create a self-guided community experience.*

## ANNUAL COAT AND BLANKET DRIVE

**Nov. 1-14 | St. Petersburg**

*Our 2nd Annual Coat & Blanket drive will help those in need, with multiple drop off locations and partnerships detailed soon.  
Last year was a tremendous success because of the love and generosity of our community. Stay tuned for more information!*

## ANNUAL TOY DRIVE

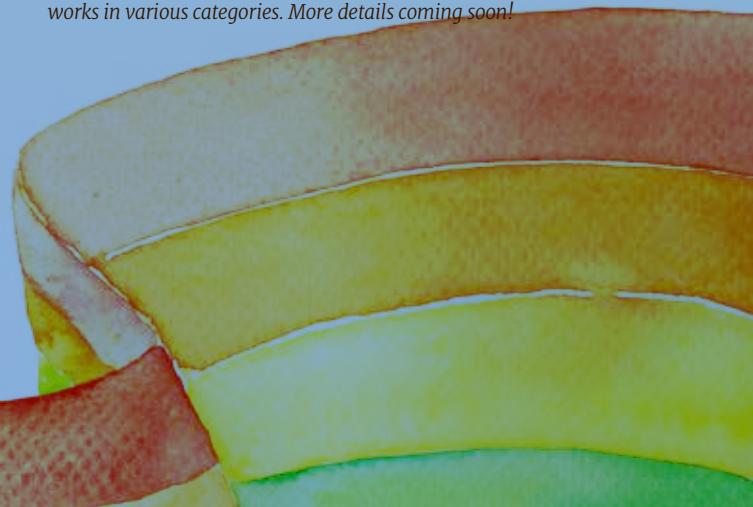
**Nov. 15-29 | St. Petersburg**

*Our 2nd Annual Toy Drive will benefit families in need of a little help this year around the holidays, with drop-off locations and partnership detailed soon. Last year was a HUGE success and thanks to the community and in partnering with Metro Inclusive Health, we were able to provide much joy to a large number of kids!*

## ARTVENTURE

**Dec. 4-12 | The Grand Central District, St. Petersburg**

*Artwork will be installed in local businesses throughout the Grand Central District. The public will vote for their favorite works in various categories. More details coming soon!*



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HatchetHangout.com

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DelizDental.studio

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HistoricPeninsulaInn.com

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ChurchStPetersburg.org

## FOOD AND DRINK:

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BigStormBrewery.com

**The Hollander Hotel**  
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TheSaintHotel.com

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BayfrontStPete.com

## PHOTOGRAPHY SERVICES:

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DylanToddPhotography.com

## REAL ESTATE:

**Nick Acosta, Downtown Expert Realty LLC**  
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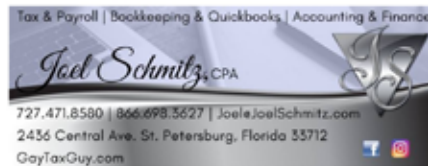
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