



*"Blind Faith" by artist Reid Jenkins*

# COME OUT

ST. PETE

3RD ANNUAL

# COME OUT ST. PETE EVENT GUIDE

**October 3 - 11, 2019**

Grand Central District & Surrounding Areas | [ComeOUTStPete.org](http://ComeOUTStPete.org)  
(1600-3100 Central Avenue, St. Pete)





All are welcome.  
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Over 100 services focused  
on the health and wellbeing  
of our LGBTQ+ community.



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2227 CENTRAL AVE, ST. PETE  
FRIDAY, 10/11, 6-8:30PM



## Come OUT Mission



**COMING OUT OF THE CLOSET AND INTO THE WORLD!**

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

## Welcome to Come OUT St. Pete 2019

Come Out St. Pete began in 2017 as a desire to celebrate National Coming Out Day (recognized on October 11th each year) within the Grand Central District. The organization became a Florida non-profit corporation 501(c)(3) in 2018.

Come OUT ST Pete has partnered with several local businesses and organizations to provide a series of exciting events in the Grand Central District and surrounding areas. The highlight of our events is the Festival and Parade on Saturday October 5th. We're expecting over 100 vendors for the festival and the return of the city block-long rainbow flag which make our daytime parade something special. Our expanded Taste of Grand Central on Thursday October 3rd highlights the supportive eateries and drinkeries in the district and is a great way to support our efforts.

It is an honor to be a part of the all-volunteer board of directors and committees in planning these events throughout the year! We welcome you to Come OUT and celebrate your individuality, inclusivity, and authenticity within the LGBTQ+ community here in St Petersburg.

Genuinely,

Chris Jones & Mandy Keyes  
Co-Chairs for Come OUT St. Pete Board of Directors

## Board Members

Mandy Keyes | Co-Chair  
Lisa Waters | Secretary  
Joshua Wallace | Treasurer  
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Chris Jones | Board Member  
Brian Longstreth | Board Member  
Bill Kody | Board Member  
Jayson Chancey | Board Member

Denise Nipper | Board Member  
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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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 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 3<sup>rd</sup> day of October, 2019.

*Rick Kriseman*  
Rick Kriseman  
Mayor



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ENVIRONMENT

Come Out St. Pete  
2529 Central Ave.  
St. Petersburg, FL 33712

October 11, 2019

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, 2019.

In such a divisive time in our nation's history, the Come Out St. Pete Festival is a haven of self-acceptance and expression, bringing together friends and neighbors in a celebration of diversity and love. It is an opportunity to highlight the unique contributions of our LGBTQ friends to our arts and business communities, providing a platform for those who are too often relegated to the shadows. For those who may not be fully aware of the vibrant diversity within our city, it is a chance to spread awareness and understanding of the unique challenges our LGBTQ community face every day. For a city known for its sunshine, I applaud you for your work to bring men, women, and non-binary folks of all sexual orientations and gender identities out of the darkness and into the light.

I appreciate and commend the efforts of Come Out St. Pete to make our corner of the world a more inclusive environment for all who live, work, and play here.

Sincerely,

*Charlie Crist*

Charlie Crist  
United States Congressman (FL-13)





# History of

## National Come OUT Day

National Come Out Day was founded in 1988 by Robert Eichberg and Jean O'Leary. Eichberg, who died in 1995 of complications from AIDS, was a psychologist from New Mexico and founder of the personal growth workshop, The Experience. O'Leary was an openly lesbian political leader and long-time activist from New York, and was at the time the head of the National Gay Rights Advocates in Los Angeles. LGBT activists,

including Eichberg and O'Leary, did not want to respond defensively to anti-LGBT action because they believed it would be predictable. This caused them to found NCOD in order to maintain positivity and celebrate coming out. The date of October 11 was chosen because it is the anniversary of the 1987 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

(source: Wikipedia)

“Visibility saves lives and makes safer communities. The progress of equality for the LGBTQ+ community is linked to providing a community where it is safe to live genuinely and safely.”

- Darden Rice



Photo credit  
Watermark



Come OUT St. Pete and the Grand Central District would like to recognize the contributions of three OUT and proud St. Petersburg City Council members Darden Rice, Amy Elizabeth Foster, and Steve Kornell.



Enter to win the Grand Prize: a weekend at the Sirata Beach Resort

# TASTE OF GRAND CENTRAL

A COME OUT ST. PETE EVENT



Eat and drink on Thursday, October 3rd at your favorite establishments in the Grand Central District, and they'll show their support for Come OUT St. Pete with a donation. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, and/or Late Night (hours vary), it's FREE to attend, Invite your friends!

- Beau & Mo's
- Urban Brew & BBQ
- Baba on Central
- The Garage on Central
- Craftsman House Gallery & Cafe
- Pom Pom's Teahouse & Sandwicheria
- Punky's Bar & Grill
- Black Crow Coffee Co.
- Community Café
- The Dog Bar
- The Hideaway
- Old Key West Bar & Grill
- Casita Taqueria
- Trophy Fish

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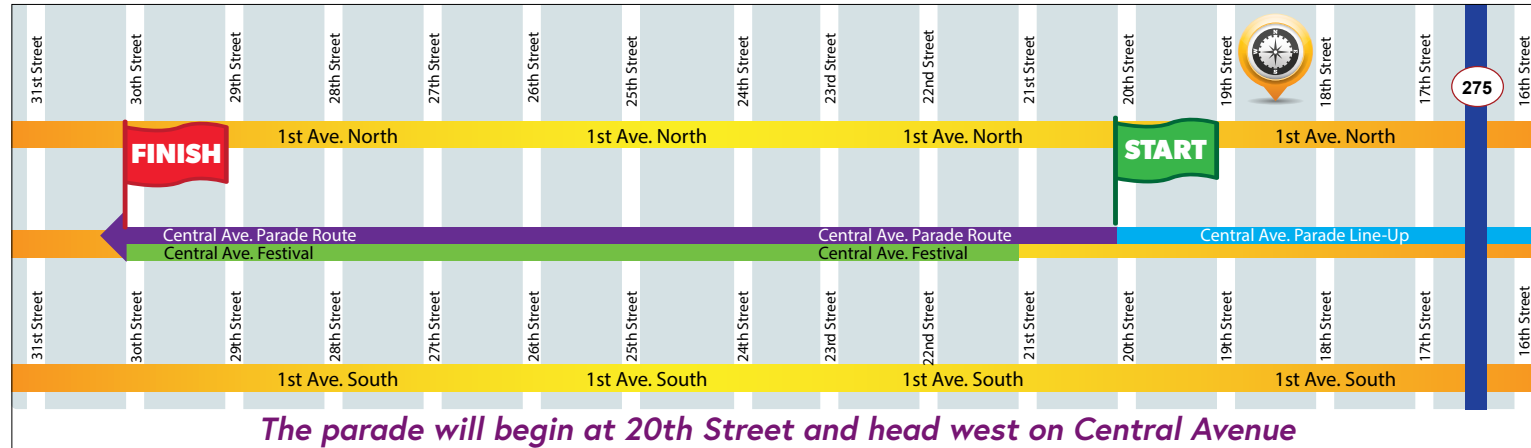
October 3rd, 2019

For more details visit us on Facebook  
or [www.comeoutstpete.org](http://www.comeoutstpete.org)

# COME OUT ST. PETE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5<sup>TH</sup> • 11 AM - NOON

## Parade Route & Festival Map



## Celebrate with us along the parade route



**Walk or ride  
in the parade!**

Parade entries and vendor pricing  
start at just \$45

Visit:

[ComeOUTStPete.org](http://ComeOUTStPete.org)

to register by 10/1/19 deadline

Join hundreds of your friends  
Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup> from 11 AM – NOON

- Help **unfurl a block-long rainbow flag** and carry it along the parade route in the Grand Central District.
- The parade will be followed by the **Grand Central Proud Festival** (on Central Avenue between 22<sup>nd</sup> St. and 31<sup>st</sup> St. N.). Shop from the largest collection of LGBTQ+ owned businesses in the country. Dozens of vendors and locally owned businesses and artists will line the sidewalks.
- Make it a **Family Fun Day**. Bring the kids or your pets and enjoy the day.
- **Free parking** on Central Ave. after the parade.
- Many businesses in the district will be providing **live entertainment and special performances** during and after the parade and market.

Here are a few!  
**SEE PAGE 9**

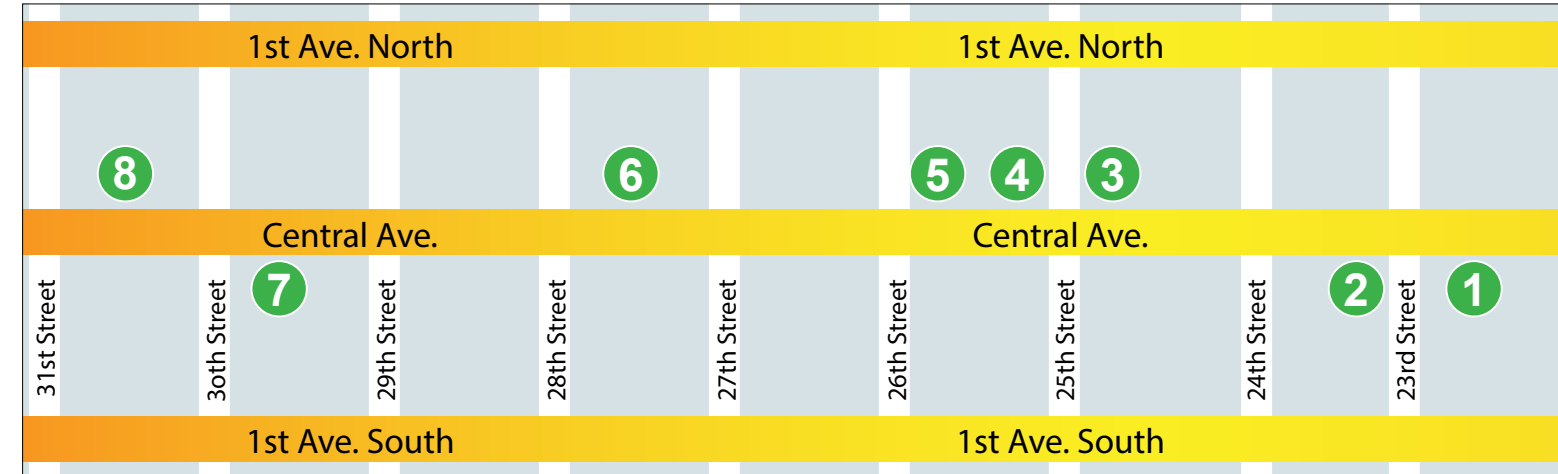
## IN THE GRAND CENTRAL DISTRICT

1600 – 3100 Blocks of Central Avenue, St. Pete

ComeOUTStPete.org



## Local Entertainment Guide



## Come OUT and party all day long!



**1 RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER | 90's theme party**  
2244 Central Ave



**2 THE DOG BAR | DJ Shannon C • 10 AM - 1 PM and 5 PM - 8 PM**  
2300 Central Ave | **Mixed Signal • 1 PM – 5 PM**



**3 OLD KEY WEST BAR & GRILL | Foam Party | DJ Jayson Chancey • 12 PM - 5 PM**  
2451 Central Ave



**4 THE QUEENS HEAD | Jennifer Real • 12 PM – 2 PM | Divine AF • 2PM - 5 PM**  
2501 Central Ave



**5 VFW POST #39 | Vogue Ball • 7 PM-10 PM**  
2599 Central Ave



**6 THE GARAGE | DJ Bill Kody • All Day**  
2729 Central Ave



**7 POM POM'S TEAHOUSE | Witch Dance • 2 PM | Musical Bingo • 6 PM**  
2950 Central Ave



**8 PUNKY'S BAR & GRILL | Victoria Does Central Drag Shows • 3 PM and 5 PM**  
3063 Central Ave







# OFFICIAL COSP EVENTS

**Thursday**  
**OCT 3** **TASTE OF GRAND CENTRAL | All day Various locations**  
Grand Central District, St. Petersburg

**Friday**  
**OCT 4** **VOGUE BALL BENEFITING THE VFW | 7 PM**  
VFW POST #39, St. Petersburg  
**LIP SYNC BATTLE | 8 PM**  
The Dog Bar, St. Petersburg

**Saturday**  
**OCT 5** *See page 8 & 9 for the parade route, market map and local entertainment guide*  
**COME OUT ST PETE BRUNCH | 9 AM - 3 PM**  
Punky's Bar & Grill, St. Petersburg  
**COME OUT ST PETE PARADE | 11 AM**  
Grand Central District, St. Petersburg *(see page 8 for route)*  
**GRAND CENTRAL PROUD FESTIVAL | 11 AM - 5 PM**  
Grand Central District, St. Petersburg *(see page 8 for street guide)*  
**OFFICIAL AFTER PARTY | 8 PM - CLOSE**  
Enigma, St. Petersburg

**Sunday**  
**OCT 6** **COME OUT ST PETE BRUNCH | 11 AM - 4 PM**  
Old Key West Bar & Grill, St. Petersburg  
**COME OUT ST PETE FAMILY BEACH DAY**  
**HOSTED BY PFLAG ST PETE | NOON - 4 PM**  
Pass-A-Grille, St. Pete Beach - in front of the Hurricane Restaurant  
**ROOFTOP SUNSET T-DANCE | 4 PM - 9 PM**  
Hurricane Seafood Restaurant, St. Pete Beach

**Thursday**  
**OCT 10** **COME OUT ST PETE PROCLAMATION FROM THE CITY OF ST PETERSBURG | 3 PM**  
Sunshine Center, St. Petersburg

**FRIDAY**  
**OCT 11** **CLOSING PARTY | 6 PM - 8:30 PM**  
Metro LGBTQ Welcome Center, St. Petersburg

For more information, visit  
[ComeOUTStPete.org](http://ComeOUTStPete.org) or [Facebook](#)

## COME OUT GRAND MARSHALLS



### CHUCK HENSON

**'YOUR MORNING NEWS' REAL TIME TRAFFIC EXPERT**  
**BAY NEWS 9**

Chuck is Your Morning News' Real Time Traffic Expert and fill-in News Anchor for Bay News 9. He is also the national "Voice" of Bands of America/Music for All, Inc, celebrating 28 years as the organization's Public Address Announcer (2016). In 2012 Music for All, Inc. induced Mr. Henson into its Bands of America Hall of Fame in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Chuck was featured in the 2011 Winter/Spring issue of "Pete" Magazine and was named "Tampa Bay's Favorite TV Personality" three times by the readers of Watermark at the annual WAVE Awards (2016, 2012, 2010) and is a two-time WMNF Peace Award Nominee.

Chuck was a proud participant in the 2010 "Tampa Bay's Dancing with the Stars" Charity Event hosted by Julie Weintraub's Hands Across the Bay and was the 2011 St Petersburg AIDS Walk Grand Marshall.



### COLE FOUST

**LGBTQ+ DIVISION MANAGER**  
**METRO INCLUSIVE HEALTH**

Cole Foust has a great passion for community service, advocacy, and education. Native to Tampa Bay, he has spent most of his life in the Sunshine State. During his academic career at the University of South Florida, he developed multiple platforms for people to engage in dialogue about social inequalities, marginalized groups, and public health issues.

In 2015, Cole served with a variety of non-profit organizations through AmeriCorps NCCC, focusing on projects related to Urban and Rural Development, Environmental Stewardship and Conservation, and Infrastructure Improvement. Cole now works at Metro Inclusive Health as the LGBTQ+ Division Manager. In his current position, he strengthens programs and services for LGBTQ+ individuals in Pinellas, Pasco, and Hillsborough Counties.

As a man who is transgender and gay, he feels strongly about educating the community about LGBTQ+ inclusivity through interactive workshops and presentations. Cole loves living in an artsy city like St. Petersburg because he also practices creative expression in the form of painting, poetry, and music.



### CLAIRE ELISAN

**FOUNDER/CEO**  
**PROJECT NO LABELS**

Claire Elisan's dedication to the LGBTQ community is clear from the moment you meet her. "My passion is helping other people. That's what makes me happy," she says of founding the not-for-profit Project No Labels. Now in its fourth year, the organization seeks to 'unite the LGBTQ+ community with our straight allies through positive activities and events while promoting volunteerism and activism.'

"Since I started Project No Labels, it inspired other organizations to start and I know because they've approached me," she says. "Organizations are now doing positive things for the community, and these groups come up and say 'how do we do this? How do we start?' Guiding them through that is really cool." "I want to encourage people to step out of reality TV per se, and to just step into reality. I would really like to see people meet outside of just online, because you don't know what you're getting there. Come out and meet your community in person," she says. Some of my favorite things are reading positive affirmations, chilling with my pets, sticking my feet in the pool and eating at least one thing that makes me happy.





# COMING OUT STORY

## REV. KAREN WELLING

### Out at Age 70

I was raised in the United Methodist Church. I was married and had a son. In 1984, at the age of 39, I went to college and then seminary. While in seminary in 1993, I fell in love with a woman. In 1994, I divorced my husband. J. and I had a long distance relationship during my ministry. After I retired, our relationship came to an end. I finally came out in 2015 at the age of 70. On Feb. 8, 2016 I moved to St. Petersburg, FL. On June 16, I met a lesbian who happened to live in my

building and I knew when I saw her she was the one. We talked and dated and on Aug. 17, 2016 we were married in Cuchara, Colorado. Eunice's family gathered to celebrate her 80th birthday, where we even had a honeymoon cabin behind the house where family was staying. We are very happy and very much in love. It is possible at the age of 71 and 80 to find the love of your life!



# COMING OUT STORY

## JUSTIN JONES

### Rural Indiana, 18 years ago

I suspected I was different when I was very young. At the age of 7, I can vividly remember my dad being mad over something trivial, screaming in my face until it was covered with his saliva and threatening me with death and burying me in the back yard, after breaking my nose. I was continually attacked by him and it seemed to happen more often after I saw my him smacking my mother's head on the bathtub. They separated for a short time and then got back together. He never hit her again, but it seemed all his rage was then passed to me. Sitting on the floor watching Saturday mourning cartoons, he came home upset again. Not a word was said. I have two other siblings. Each only a year apart. He grabbed me by the hair and pulled me from the ground - feet dangling, while he shook me by the hair screaming that I needed to clean the house. These are just examples.

I had a break down at 17. I had gotten in trouble while running around with two other outcasts, who happened to be girls. We had taken golf carts from the local golf club and played bumper cars late at night. During this time, I had an epiphany. There was nothing I could do to change the fact I was gay. I cried, prayed, my face went paralyzed temporarily on one side (Bell's Palsy) because of the stress. I later confided in a friend. And it felt so good. I however made a mistake and told a girl who had a tendency to tell everything to everyone. The next day the whole school knew. This school was your typical small town football school with no mixed culture. Next thing I know I'm plunged head first into a battle field. That first day of getting outed I fought. I beat the kid badly after class. He said before the altercation he was going to "catch me on a back road and slit my throat".

Later in life, I got beat over doing arts, musicals etc., because it wasn't manly or interfered with football which I was forced to play all through my school years. I started experimenting with alcohol and other things.

Things like that continued for a good while and now life is slowing down. I'm just ready for comfort.




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# COMING OUT STORY

## PIERROT OBO

### Black Boy Free

I was born in Northern Italy, in Central Reggio Emilia. We moved to the very outskirts of Reggio when I was 8, to a town called Campagnola Emilia.

I'm the first of three born into a very strict and poor Nigerian family. I always knew I was different; to be quite frank, I thought I was pretty normal until I was told, in fact, I was different. As far as I can remember, I was always physically attracted to boys. I didn't have a name for what I was feeling inside, until one day a classmate of mine came to me and asked "is it true that you're a faggot?". I must have been 9. If I recall correctly, I went straight to the teacher and asked "Miss, what does "faggot" mean?". I can't remember her answer.

I was relentlessly bullied for most of my school life. I was an easy target, the only black, flamboyant kid. I used to get pushed around, thrown things at, chanted at; any action you associate with bullying, I probably went through it. One time, I'll never forget, I was part of the school musical and at the end of the show I came out for my bows. This guy, one of my most avid bullies, came to my ear as I was taking my bow, and whispered "you die, you faggot". I didn't react, I never said anything, I never defended myself. My only defense mechanism was to pretend I wasn't there, my brain would shut off and I would convince myself that was not happening to me.

By the time I got to high school, I was basically a recluse. I was mostly in the classroom, church and home. Home life was just as problematic. As far as I'm concerned, my childhood was loveless. What I can mainly remember were the daily beatings, the yelling, the verbal abuse, the violence. I believe my parents always knew I was gay. I didn't tell them though, they simply found my collection of gay porn in the computer. "You can't be gay, because gays go to hell" was my mum's opinion on the matter; "I won't allow you to be a faggot in my house" was my father's.

I became sexually active when I was 12. He was 28, but I

told him I was 17. Looking back, I was looking to fill the void in me. All I wanted was to be loved, to be held.

As soon as I finished high school, I moved as far and as quickly as I could to London. I wanted my own space, I wanted to be on my own. I wanted to become a professional singer, I wanted to be happy. I knew the only way I could be happy was to leave my hometown, and so I did. But that's when things spiraled almost out of control. All the issues that I failed to deal with in my childhood, all jumped at me at once and I was not ready for it. Depression and anxiety became my daily companions.

I attempted suicide three times since I moved to London. Because of my lifelong need to be loved, I got into toxic relationships that left me lonelier, sadder, and more broken.

Luckily, I found friends along the way who loved me dearly. I found the strength to come out to them and they pushed me to seek help, which I did. Fast forward to the present time, I've been diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder, which allowed me to start therapy, get on medications and begin my recovery.

I'm just at the beginning of my recovery. I've come to terms with the fact that life is tough. Life is like a wind: sometimes it blows against you, other times it blows in your direction. It's all about what you make of those moments, it's all about never giving up on yourself. We are alive; we have the utmost privilege to be here now, to be alive. It is our gift back to The Creator to make the most out of it.

I'm learning to put myself first. I'm learning to love myself. I'm nowhere near fixed. I'm working on mending my relationship with my parents, who have shown the desire to redeem themselves and make it right now. I'm learning the immense power of forgiveness and the peace it gives you. There's still so many questions. I don't know what will become of me tomorrow; but today I am trying. I deserve peace. I deserve to be happy. I am ready to be happy.



We are proud to support



## Come Out and Come In.

Weekend Breakfast Buffet 9am -1pm  
Drink specials all day Saturday & Sunday!

**OLD KEY WEST** Bar & Grill

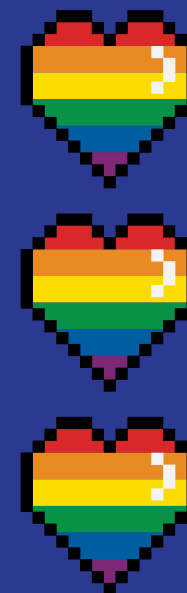
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# COMING OUT STORY

## CHRIS JONES



I grew up in a small rural town in Arkansas. Being gay was not something that was discussed. I tried the "girlfriend" thing in high school and college, but was never very successful. I moved to Missouri in my late 20's to attend bible college and become a children's church pastor. My second year in college, I moved off campus with a "straight" buddy and that summer we ended up having sex. I knew then that I could not return to bible college and in fact, finally admitted to myself that I was gay!

I remember going to my first gay bar (scared to death) and seeing a drag show. A year later, I met who I thought was the "man of my dreams". Needless to say, I had never experienced a gay relationship before and it certainly was not how I had envisioned it to be. It was an abusive relationship. After almost 2 years, that relationship ended and I was once again left on my own. I turned to an online chat room, which quickly became my online family. There were folks from all over the world that would gather online every night and chat and we became a very close-knit group. It was there that I finally met the true man of my dreams! Long story short, I left Missouri to meet him in Florida and moved in with him all at the same time! (I know, scary right?). I was very fortunate and it was the best thing to ever happen to me. We had a 21 wonderful years together, until he passed away in March of 2018.

Now, I'm forced back into the single life and attempting to find myself again and where I belong without him by my side! It has been a time of growth, self dependency and holding on to the faith that one day I might be fortunate enough to find true love once again. I remain optimistic!



# Sit. Stay. Drink.

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# COME OUT

ST. PETE

Celebrate & Come OUT at

## Punky's!

Thursday, Oct 3rd

Taste of Grand Central 5-9pm

Brittany Baldwin Live! 6-9pm

Friday Oct 4th

DJ Bill Kody 7-10pm

Saturday Oct 5th

Open Early! 9am

Victoria's Drag Extravaganza

Early Shows 3pm & 5pm

Sunday Oct 6th

Brunch 11am-3pm w/ \$3 Mimosas

and \$5 Tito's Bloody Marys





# COMING OUT STORY

## Chuck Henson



As young gay people, we learn to lead a “double life” early on... One people see and one they don't. That secret part of us we don't dare to share with another person. Every side conversation we hear from the people we love involves some sort of slang about being gay. They didn't know it, but the people we love were the one driving us back farther away from our own truth.

**Coming out is hard.** It's an endless process we are asked to do our entire lives. We talk about coming out as if it's a one-time event. It's not. Every new person you meet, every new job, every new neighbor, and friend. We come out every day and always. And for some it doesn't get any easier than that first heart-wrenching conversation with a beloved family member or friend.

I was 18 and I'd only been “out” to myself for a year, when I made the big announcement to my Mom. I was driving, facing forward the entire time so I couldn't see her reac-

tion. When I was done pouring out my heart, praying that our Family would still be in tact when I was done with my confession, she looked at me and said “Chuck, I know. I've known for years.” She went on to say that my late Father had asked her when I was in High School if she thought I was gay. It was out there... I was out. And my Mom passed her parenting test with flying colors. She would later go on to be a member of PFLAG. I've worked my entire life to make her Proud, and in the years to follow it was me who was insanely proud of her.

Proud of every Pride Parade she stood and watched as I would march by. Proud of all the support she gave to every man I ever dated or introduced her to. Proud to be HER son.

My Mom is 95 years old with failing mental health. Recently she asked my Sister if I was gay. Having that conversation with her again would be one of the greatest moments of my life, because I already know how she'll react. With flying (pride) colors.



# Miss Come OUT St. Pete 2019, Victoria Michaels

Victoria has spent the last seven years raising money for the St Petersburg community. She currently runs an Award-winning bingo event at Punky's Bar and Grill on Tuesday nights, raising money for local charities! After winning Miss BrokenSlut 2019, she began a fundraiser for VFW Post #39 to refurbish the upstairs hall. Aligning the communities for the LGBTQ+ community. Victoria will host the rebirth of the vogue culture with her creation of the first annual ELEMENTAL BALL held at the VFW on Oct 4 as a part of the Come OUT St Pete festivities.

**Rick Clark**  
Appraisal Services, Inc  
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# Open Letter to Come OUT St. Pete

I admire and respect what you are celebrating and hoping to achieve with your work and events, but I want to share my perspective here and why I still plan to stay in the closet.

Last year I turned 50, and was moved to evaluate my life, my relationships, and my work. What I found was that I am still too terrified to make that final move out of the shadows. Let me try to explain...

I have lied to myself, lied to others and have lived a general life of being an imposter. Lots of little white lies about dates, lost loves, and on and on. At this point I am fearfully dependent on the job where I make my living and convinced that if I did come out, the people who I had hurt would be unforgiving. Retirement and the dream of financial independence seem to be in the near future but the light keeps getting pushed back...or at least in my mind.

In a world of "winner takes all" in sales, the thought of that is so dreadful I can only see negatives to the story. I have heard how they talk about the competition; I know their jokes and the cruel ways it would be portrayed.

I have heard the words and subtle innuendos by my family. Recently a brother was telling me he knows that there is no "Gay" gene and that it is a manifestation of having an abusive family and unresolved family dysfunctions. Yes, he knows it all, just ask him...not gonna confide to him anytime soon. My dog is the only real family that knows me as I am.

So that leaves me painfully aware of my limitations and saddens me to think about what I miss by not being honest and unafraid. Sorry that I have hurt so many with a lack of self-respect and lack of courage.


Maybe my story changes, with time...maybe I will have the courage to stand tall and just be myself. I do want that kind of joy I see in many other Proud men and women. I respect your ability to be yourself. Alas, today is not my day to come out from the closeted shadows.


Respectfully,

*A man caught between two worlds*


  
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