

HOLD FOR RELEASE UNTIL SEPTEMBER 16

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## **INTERNATIONAL HEADLINERS JOIN PULSE COMMUNITY GRAND MARSHALS TO CELEBRATE, HONOR AND HEAL ORLANDO AT 2016 PRIDE**

**Orlando, Florida — September 15, 2016 —** The 2016 Come Out With Pride Festival presented by Orlando City Soccer Club — Orlando's officially sanctioned annual Pride event — will be Orlando's largest and most significant in the city's history as Orlando's LGBTQ+ community and allies celebrate the goodness and strength in the Central Florida community. Orlando's Come Out With Pride Festival takes place Saturday, October 8 at Downtown Orlando's picturesque Lake Eola Park, with preceding events both Thursday and Friday.

After the June 12 tragedy at Pulse Nightclub, love and support began to pour in to Orlando from around the world. As the city continues to heal, Come Out With Pride (COWP) is and continues to be an uplifting event where LGBTQ+ individuals and allies gather together to celebrate and heal as a community.

“Since the first march in 1969 following Stonewall, Pride events have always been about conquering hate and inequality through peaceful congregation,” said Brian Riha, COWP Board President. “Last year we celebrated the June Marriage Equality Supreme Court decision and later many questioned if we would still need Pride. After the senseless massacre of 49 individuals at a gay nightclub this June, the answer is unequivocally yes.”

Employees of Pulse as well as victims’ family members will be honored as part of the Community Pride Marshals in this year’s parade. Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs, Orlando City Mayor Buddy Dyer, Orlando City Commissioner Patty Sheehan, Orlando Police Chief John Mina as well as Orlando Police Department, Fire Department, ORMC staff and other first responders will also be included and thanked for their bravery and outstanding support.

Come Out With Pride has been touched by the outpouring of support from creative artists and celebrities the world over. Special celebrity guests scheduled to appear on both our Pride Stage and Walt Disney Amphitheater Stage include Michelle Clunie (Queer as Folk, Teen Wolf, The Usual Suspects), Peter Paige (Queer as Folk, creator: The Fosters), cast and producers from The Fosters (Freeform, formerly ABC Family), Tony Award winner Michael Cerveris (Fun Home, The Good Wife, Fringe), Matteo Lane (Nightly Show, Late Night with Seth Meyers), Sabrina Jalees (writer: NBC’s Crowded; Transparent, AfterEllen; Tedx), Eli Lieb (singer/songwriter) & Brandon Skeie (singer/songwriter) and RJ Aguiar & Will Shepherd (YouTube celebrity vloggers “Shep689”).

More celebrity guests and special events will be announced in the lead up to the event. Opportunities to meet several of Pride’s special celebrity guests will be available with VIP Experience ticket packages (\$85/person pre-sale, \$105 with Parade Grandstand seating).

New for 2016, the Taste of Pride features an extraordinary dining experience created specifically for Pride by world-renowned celebrity chefs including Art Smith, Cat Cora, Elizabeth Falkner plus 15 others. Guests at this specialty ticketed event will be able to sample a wide variety of dishes and mingle with all of the chefs. (Full list at [comeoutwithpride.com/events/taste-of-pride](http://comeoutwithpride.com/events/taste-of-pride); \$150/pp).

Saturday's programming closes with a very special tribute to the victims of the Pulse shooting, including a reading of the names and moment of silence, as well as a LIVE onstage version of Broadway for Orlando's benefit recording of "What the World Needs Now" featuring appearances from current Broadway artists. The tribute and festival concludes with a spectacular fireworks finale over Lake Eola.

COWP is one of the largest LGBTQ+ celebrations in Florida and is expected to attract over 150,000 visitors who in turn will inject several million into the local economy.

Come Out With Pride gratefully thanks its sponsors including 2016 Presenting Sponsor Orlando City Soccer Club, Verizon (Taste of Pride sponsor), Marriott (Pride Marketplace sponsor), PNC Bank (Parade sponsor), SunTrust (VIP Experience sponsor), Wawa (Pride Stages sponsor), DoubleTree by Hilton (official hotel), Delta (official airline), Nissan (official automotive supplier), Watermark Publishing Group (official media partner) and over 50 additional sponsors and partners. For a full list visit [www.comeoutwithpride.com/sponsors](http://www.comeoutwithpride.com/sponsors).

Come Out With Pride, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit organization run entirely by volunteers. It organizes the annual LGBTQ+ Pride Celebration in Orlando — now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year — and through its mission provides scholarships and grants via its 'Pride Gives Back' program.

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