ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

In St. Petersburg, Florida, intentional inclusivity is at the heart of our city, especially for LGBTQ+ residents. Despite the passage of recent statewide policies, St. Pete remains focused on fostering inclusive progress and diversity.

Under the leadership of Mayor Kenneth T. Welch, significant strides have been made for LGBTQ+ individuals. Mayor Welch's signing of the GLSEN Proclamation in May demonstrates his pledge to "Rise Up" for LGBTQ+ youth in Florida, championing their rights and well-being.

St. Pete's commitment to celebrating inclusivity is prominently showcased with our annual Pride Month events in June. With the city's support, the St. Pete Pride Parade and Festival is now the largest of its kind in Florida and ranks among the top 40 largest Pride celebrations globally. In 2023, an estimated 300,000 people joined in the festivities.

In September, the city enacted an administrative policy requiring all single-occupant and family restrooms to be made available for all genders and clearly marked as such. This policy ensures that St. Pete remains a welcoming place for all, regardless of gender identity and gender expression.

St. Pete's inclusive policies extend far beyond symbolism, with the appointment of two LGBTQ+ liaisons, one for the City and one for the St. Petersburg Police Department.

The liaisons play a vital role in fostering a harmonious and welcoming environment internally and across St. Pete. Because of our intentional focus on equity and inclusion, it comes as no surprise that in 2023, St. Pete was recognized by *Outside Magazine* as one of the 15 Happiest Towns in America, showcasing the city's commitment to all residents.

Even in the face of recent discriminatory legislation targeting LGBTQ+ individuals in Florida, the City of St. Petersburg stands dedicated to fostering inclusive progress. It continues to proudly raise the Pride Flag every year, sending a powerful message that love, respect, and equality are valued and deeply ingrained in who we are as a city.

#WeAreStPete