

Disney VoluntEARS Support Come Out With Pride Orlando

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla., Oct. 12, 2015 – Disney VoluntEARS including Cast Members from PRIDE Diversity Resource Group represented Walt Disney World at Come Out With Pride Orlando, held at Lake Eola Park on Saturday, Oct. 10.

Now in its eleventh year, the event welcomed thousands of attendees including members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, as well as their allies, for a celebration of culture, unity and inclusiveness.

Walt Disney World’s support of the event dates back to its 2005 founding. VoluntEARS represented Disney in the parade and helped run the popular Disney Kid Zone, which featured arts & crafts, coloring and a photo opportunity – all aimed at encouraging children and families to be their authentic, creative selves. They also raised awareness of Bullying Prevention Month, in partnership with the PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights’) National Bullying Prevention Center and the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), sharing anti-bullying tips and resources.

“It is heartwarming to march down the parade route and see some in the crowd mouth ‘thank you’ or have tears in their eyes,” said Troy Loutsenhizer, manager, Textile Services and president, PRIDE Diversity Resource Group. “After all these years, there is still significant validation with Disney’s participation.”

PRIDE, one of seven Diversity Resource Groups at Walt Disney World, serves LGBT Cast Members and allies with resources, learning opportunities and a supportive network. Disney’s support of fostering an inclusive workplace for LGBT employees includes its sponsorship of the inaugural Equality Institute, held at Walt Disney World this past summer.

Diversity and inclusion matters.” said Nancy Gidusko, director, Corporate Citizenship, Walt Disney World. “Thinking, living and working inclusively is the right thing to do, and it’s also smart for business and builds communities that nurture, inspire and empower children and families to create a brighter world.”

Disney’s citizenship outreach to the LGBT community in Central Florida includes support of Come Out With Pride and the Metropolitan Business Association, along with the Orlando Gay Chorus, and the Zebra Coalition, which focuses on creating opportunities for youth experiencing homelessness to grow up in a safe, healthy and supportive environment.