

LIKEME® Lighthouse – KC changes name to The Kansas City Center for Inclusion

Center renews commitment to local Kansas City LGBTQ+ community, celebrates five-year anniversary.

May 15, 2017

LIKEME® Lighthouse-KC, 3911 Main Street, announces a new identity and changes in its leadership. The organization is celebrating five years as the LGBTQ+ community center in the heart of midtown Kansas City, Missouri.

Originally formed by Kansas City-born country music star Chely Wright, LIKEME® opened the LIKEME® Lighthouse in Kansas City in 2012 in order to provide a safe and welcoming place for the area LGBTQ+ community and their friends, family, and allies.

The LIKEME® Lighthouse was formed to fill a void after the original Lesbian and Gay Community Center of Kansas City, located at 207 Westport Road, closed in 2008.

"In renaming our community center and becoming independent from the nationally-focused LIKEME® organization, we have an opportunity to expand on Chely Wright's original vision for our organization, while being able to now focus more on inclusion and the challenges facing Kansas City's diverse LGBTQ+ community," said Darin Challacombe, Board President. "Our new name underscores our commitment to remaining local, to keeping all funding within the Kansas City area, and to mentoring and fostering leadership even more for the people we serve."

A team of 15 volunteers, board members, and Kansas City community voices from outside the Board chose the new name – **The Kansas City Center for Inclusion** – along with the domain name **inclusivekc.org**.

The name becomes official in May 2017, as center volunteers begin to redecorate the building at 3911 Main with updates to signage. The center will begin converting web and email domain names to redirect to the new name (**inclusivekc.org**), engaging with new advertising efforts and conducting other rebranding activities.

"Chely Wright and the National LIKEME organization got us off to a great start and helped all of us make positive, meaningful impacts to hundreds of people who engaged with us in the last five years. We are forever grateful for that and it allows us to bring her vision to life," said Lora Ceperley, Board Member.

"We are committed to Kansas City and maintaining a Center for all of the Rainbow Community. We are ready to fly from the nest now to make the organization even more attuned to everyone we serve," said Challacombe.

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Facts about the Kansas City Center for Inclusion (formerly LIKEME Lighthouse-KC):

- In 2016, LIKEME® Lighthouse-KC served over 2,500 walk-ins, including over 2,000 individuals at Pride KC 2016 and over 100 youth at our 2016 Equality Teen Prom.
- LIKEME® Lighthouse-KC is operated almost entirely by volunteers with an annual operating budget of less than \$20,000.
- Annually, LIKEME® Lighthouse-KC sponsors the Equality Teen Prom and National Coming Out Day, and participates in area events such as Transgender Day of Remembrance, AIDS Walk Kansas City, and Pride KC.
- LIKEME® Lighthouse-KC has over 1,500 LGBTQIA books in our lending library.