



Mayor Daley Welcomes the World to Chicago at Gay Games

By [Ron Matthew Inawat](#)

Chicago, IL - Chicago Mayor, Richard M. Daley, welcomed the world to Chicago this past Saturday evening at the historic Soldier Field during the opening ceremonies of the seventh Gay Games.

Mullally gives spirited introduction

Will & Grace star Megan Mullally introduced the mayor, "Mr. Daley has been instrumental in bringing the Gay Games here to Chicago where the city welcomes 12,000 athletes, their fans, friends and spectators."

"And now - he's here - he's not queer - but we're used to it."

"Please join and welcome to the stage, Chicago Mayor, the Honorable Richard M. Daley."

Mayor Daley address Gay Games spectators

The mayor opened his address, "On behalf of the people of Chicago, with great pride and admiration, I am delighted to welcome you to the Seventh Gay Games."

The mayor continued to extend acknowledgements to all of the staff and volunteers of the Gay Games, which was greeted with thunderous applause by over 35,000 in attendance. And moments later, the entire venue erupted when the mayor proclaimed, "Gay men and women are welcome in Chicago!"

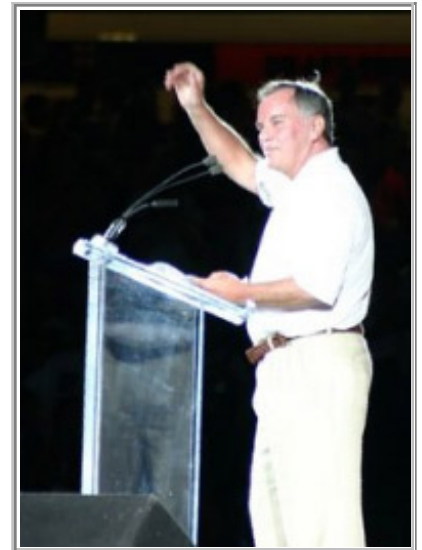
The mayor continued, "Chicago combines Midwestern hospitality with big city sophistication. We welcome everyone to our city - regardless of age, income, background, gender or sexual orientation. We understand that diversity makes our city strong, dynamic and exciting. It attracts visitors and new residents who would rather much live in a vibrant city like Chicago than a place where everyone looks and acts alike.

"Chicago is composed of many distinct communities based on ethnic origin religion neighborhood, sexual orientation, or other common interest. Each has its own identity, but they all get along with each other - work together to make this city a better city. More than 1,500 languages are spoken in our city. Twenty six ethnic groups in Chicago have at least 25 members or more. We have distinct neighborhoods multitude of religions and variety of lifestyles. We are fortunate to have a very large and active gay and lesbian community. If you were here three weeks ago, you saw over 400,000 people turn out in the rain for the annual gay, lesbian pride parade - one of the largest in the nation."

"These were people of all ages and incomes and from all walks of life. Gay and lesbian communities are made up of our brothers and sisters, our mothers and fathers, our sons and daughters. They're our doctors and school teachers, bankers, factory workers, every aspect of our city life. We are about to see that many of them are pretty good athletes as well from Chicago."

"I am proud that Chicago has been at the forefront - when it comes to meeting the needs and aspirations of the gay and lesbian community. We have provided domestic partnership benefits to our city employees. We have outlawed discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity."

"With substantial city financial assistance we are constructing the Center on Halsted, the first community center of its kind in the Midwest for Lesbian, Gay, bisexual and transgendered people. I am very proud to be the honorary chairperson of its capital campaign along with Billie Jean King, a wonderful Chicago resident."



"Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community have contributed to Chicago in every imaginable way - business, education, arts, neighborhood revitalization and development. They deserve to have the City of Chicago standing on their side and I will continue to do this as long as I am mayor of this great city."

"Unfortunately, not every place is as open and welcome as Chicago. In this country, around the world, gays and lesbians still encounter violence, police harassment, censorship and discrimination. And in this country, many states and even the Federal government continue to propose anti-gay legislation, because politicians consider it an easy way to win votes and to divert attention from the most critical issues affecting the quality of life. And there is a lot of work to be done before gay lesbian bisexual and transgendered people enjoy all the rights accorded to the rest of society."

"As we move forward lets work to get the entire world to adhere to the principles of the Gay Games - participation, inclusion and personal best. The Gay Games are designed to instill pride in the LGBT community, but they are also open to everybody. Pride in the community, openness to all - that is what your community stands for - and that is what the City of Chicago stands for as well. Enjoy the games - Gay Games 7 - where the world meets is right here in the City of Chicago."

"We are glad you are here. Enjoy the hospitality. And we have great pride in the Gay Games. God bless you and thank you."

Photo Credit: Ryan Kolodziej, ChicagoPride.com Photographer

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See [more Gay Games photos](#)