



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Unique gathering of GLBT Jews to take place in Bay Area  
March 7-9, 2008**  
*Group "creates authentic spiritual community for GLBT Jews"*

San Francisco, CA, December 19, 2007. Nehirim, a national organization that provides spiritual and cultural community for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) Jews, partners, and allies, is hosting its first weekend on the West Coast, after four years of retreats in Connecticut and New York. The retreat will be presented in partnership with JewishMosaic: The National Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity.

Nehirim retreats are unique gatherings that bring together GLBT Jews (and non-Jewish partners) for a weekend of spirituality, education, and community. Teachers at Nehirim West will include Rabbi Jane Litman, Rabbi Elliot Kukla, Maggid Jhos Singer, and Karen Erlichman, performing artists S. Bear Bergman and Sara Felder, Nehirim executive director Jay Michaelson, and retreat director Rabbi Julia Watts Belser. Past Nehirim retreats have sold out, including over 150 participants at the recent "Queer Shabbaton" in New York.

"Members of sexual minorities have unique ways of relating to spirituality, due to the way we experience love and the way we have had to adjust to an often hostile society," Michaelson said, noting that the experience of gays and lesbians is, in many respects, similar to that of Jews in non-Jewish societies. "Nehirim is about celebrating those gifts, and the diversity within our community."

The weekend will include traditional and innovative Sabbath prayers, as well as meditation, text study, movement and dance, spiritual direction, and performance art. "We draw upon queer Jewish art, culture, text, and traditions to create a safe space for exploring the spiritual gifts of GLBT Jews," Belser said. "Nehirim brings together Jews from all walks of life – across the spectrum of the Jewish community."

Founded in 2003, Nehirim is a nondenominational, independent organization under the fiscal sponsorship of the Jewish Funds for Justice and supported by the Charles & Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation. The San Francisco-based Walter and Elise Haas fund is supporting the Nehirim West retreat.

For most participants, Nehirim's warm, welcoming community is a strong draw. "Nehirim offers us a chance to forge deep connections with other GLBT Jews," Belser said, "and to experience the blessing of a full and unabashed welcome."

---

**MORE INFORMATION:** Sasha T. Goldberg, Assistant Director  
stg@nehirim.org, 415-871-7113  
[www.nehirim.org](http://www.nehirim.org)

Nehirim: GLBT Jewish Culture and Spirituality ([www.nehirim.org](http://www.nehirim.org)) creates authentic spiritual and cultural community for GLBT Jews, partners, and allies. . .  
Nehirim is supported by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family

Foundation, and the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, and is under the fiscal sponsorship of the Jewish Funds for Justice.



**WALTER & ELISE HAAS FUND**

