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**PRAYING WITH OUR FEET
GAY JEWS JOIN WITH WIDER JEWISH COMMUNITY FOR MARCH ON
WASHINGTON ON HOLIDAY OF SIMCHAT TORAH**

BOSTON, MA/NEW YORK, N.Y./WASHINGTON, DC: On October 11, 2009, thousands of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) Jews and Jewish allies will mark the ancient holiday of Simchat Torah by marching on our nation's capitol to demand full equality.

Organized by GLBT Jewish organizations Keshet, Nehirim: GLBT Jewish Culture and Spirituality, The Kurlander Program for Gay & Lesbian Outreach and Engagement (GLOE) at the Washington DC Jewish Community Center, and the National Union of Jewish LGBTIQQ Students (NUJLS), the Jewish Community will march together behind a banner reading, "If Not Now, When? The Jewish Community Stands for Full Equality and Justice" at the National Equality March. This is the first national GLBT rights march in which there will be an organized and united Jewish presence representing diverse segments of the Jewish community. The Jewish contingent will meet at the DC JCC at 10:30am on Sunday, October 11th (1529 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington, DC).

Moreover, a robust turnout for the Jewish contingent is expected, and many of the most influential leaders in the American Jewish community have endorsed the march, including Rabbi Eric Yoffie, President of the Union for Reform Judaism; Rabbi David Saperstein, Director of the Religious Action Center; Rabbi Mark Diamond, Executive Vice President of the Southern California Board of Rabbis; and Lynn Schusterman, a leading U.S. philanthropist.

"We proudly and unequivocally support full equality for GLBT people," says Schusterman, who supports the work of Keshet, NUJLS and Nehirim. "We believe it is vitally important to create and support initiatives that meet the needs, interests, and concerns of GLBT Jews so that we can

build a more welcoming community — one that celebrates diversity and promotes inclusiveness in Jewish life. I am proud that some of our grantees are marching today as a united Jewish contingent on behalf of this vision.”

October 11 also marks the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah, a joyous festival that celebrates the completion of the annual reading of the Torah. The holiday’s traditional observance includes communal processions, joyful gatherings, and dancing with the Torah scrolls. For Idit Klein, Executive Director of Keshet, marching on the nation’s capitol on this day is an act of prayer. “Like Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said when he marched in Selma with Dr. King, ‘Even without words, our march was worship. I felt my legs were praying.’ So too will the GLBT Jewish community move, dance, and march in celebration of our tradition’s teachings of justice, dignity, and action, and toward full equality for GLBT people.”

On the evening before the march, all are invited to a Queer Simchat Torah program at the Washington, DC Jewish Community Center organized by GLOE, Nehirim, Keshet, and NUJLS with generous support from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Keshet

Keshet is a Boston-based grassroots organization that works for the full inclusion of GLBT Jews in Jewish Life

<http://www.keshetonline.org>

Nehirim: GLBT Jewish Culture & Spirituality

Nehirim builds community for GLBT Jews, partners, and allies

<http://www.nehirim.org>

Kurlander Program for Gay & Lesbian Outreach and Engagement (GLOE) at the Washington DC JCC

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<http://washingtondcjjcc.org/social-networks/gloe/>

NUJLS (National Union of Jewish Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Questioning Students)

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For more information on the National Equality March: <http://equalityacrossamerica.org/>