



Contact: Porter Gilberg
PorterG@centerlb.org
562.434.4455 x.245

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THE LGBTQ CENTER OF LONG BEACH ANNOUNCES *THE BLACK AND WHITE BALL* 2015 HONOREES

Center Gala to Honor Golden Globe Winning Amazon Studios Show *Transparent* with Center Celebrity Icon Award

Long Beach, California- The LGBTQ Center of Long Beach is proud to present *The 2nd Annual Black and White Ball*, on Saturday, March 21, 2015 at the new Lagunita Pavillion at Hotel Maya at 6pm. The event is The Center's signature gala, presenting guests with an evening of elegance and sophistication in the spirit of celebrating the LGBTQ community's many accomplishments.

"The community response to our gala last year was simply amazing," says Ron Sylvester, president and chairman of The LGBTQ Center of Long Beach. "This year we look forward to welcoming hundreds guests to our event to celebrate our Center and our fabulous LGBTQ community."

The evening will include live music, an exclusive performance by Bravo TV's Julie Goldman, dinner, dancing, silent auction and three Center Icon Awards. The Center will honor the cast and creators of Amazon Studio's groundbreaking series *Transparent* with its 2015 Celebrity Icon Award for their contribution to providing unprecedented visibility to the transgender community and for their commitment to supporting transgender actors and writers.

According to executive director Porter Gilberg, "*Transparent* truly sets the bar for television content that includes positive and affirming transgender stories and characters. We look forward to honoring the cast and crew of this pioneering and award-winning show at our community celebration."

The Political Icon Award will be presented to Congressman Alan Lowenthal for his years of advocacy on behalf of LGBTQ rights in Congress and previously as a state and local legislator. The Community Icon Award will be awarded to Ellen Ward, former Mayor of Signal Hill and former executive director of AIDS Walk Long Beach. Ward will receive this honor for her decades of local community service to support LGBTQ and HIV positive individuals.

Proceeds from the Black and White Ball will support the many programs and services of The Center, the largest publically supported LGBTQ direct services organization in greater Long Beach, serving and estimated 25,000 clients per year. Last year's event raised more than \$40,000 for The Center which has allowed the organization to increase programming and hire additional staff members. Support for The Black and White Ball is provided by The Port of Long Beach, Southern California Edison, Supervisor Don Knabe, Interval House, Jet Blue, and Nick Chavez Beverly Hills. Tickets to the event are \$150 and are available now on The Center's website, www.centerlb.org or in person at the front desk of The Center at 2017 East 4th Street in Long Beach.