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The LGBTQ Center Long Beach welcomes new members to board of directors

LONG BEACH, CA, December 7, 2020 – The LGBTQ Center Long Beach announces today the addition of three new members to the board of directors: Long Beach business owner **Romeo Garcia**, resident **Alishia Holmes-Watson**, and Wilmington native **Victor Ibarra**. Each have extensive experience working with underserved populations in the community.

“The Executive Committee recognized the need and opportunity for more diversity on the board,” said Board president Stella Ursua. “Each of these new members have proven track records in the Asian/Pacific Islander, Latinx and African American communities of the greater Long Beach area. They will bring a fresh perspective to the growth of The Center.”

Chef **Romeo Garcia** is a small business owner, founding Romeo Chocolates in 2014 through pop-ups followed by a brick-and-mortar chocolate and wine bar in Downtown Long Beach since 2017. He serves on the Long Beach Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, and the Culinary Advisory Board for Long Beach City College. Throughout his diverse career, Garcia has worked in human rights community organizing, cofounded a Gay Men’s Community Organizing Project, Get out the Vote initiatives, Liwanag Cultural Center, and Pilipino Youth Coalition. He is a successful grant-writer for community development and student services, directing higher education programs for low income, first generation students, and students with disabilities for more than 12 years at local community colleges and universities

Since moving to Long Beach in 2014, **Alishia Holmes-Watson** has served a number of non-profit organizations in various capacities. Currently she is as a board member with the Downtown Long Beach Alliance and chairperson of their Marketing and Communications committee. She also has served as ambassador of No Black Girl Left Behind, LA Chapter which is an organization that connects and uplifts minority women, creates resources that promote leadership in local communities and furthers education on black culture. She strives to push for diverse representation and empowering the marginalized. She studied civil engineering at Florida A & M University, a historically black university and is currently continuing her education

in Business Management focusing on entrepreneurship. Alishia has been a Flight Attendant with an US based airline for 11 years.

Born and raised in Wilmington, **Victor Ibarra** is Senior Field Representative for Democratic Caucus Chairman Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson of the 64th District. He proudly identifies as First-Generation Queer Latino and is passionate about addressing the lack of political involvement and underrepresentation in his community. A graduate of UC Irvine with a degree in political science, he has served 4 years as a delegate to the California Democratic party. An alumnus of the 2018 Equality California Leadership Academy class, he has been recognized by the State Senate with an “Extraordinary Citizen” award and by the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce as “Man of the Year.” He serves on the board of directors for EXP, a non-profit that aims at bridging industry and high schools together to build tomorrow’s workforce from underserved Southern California communities.

“We are thrilled that The Center’s board reflects the diverse backgrounds of our clients and partners,” adds Ursua. “Together we continue to work towards creating fully affirming communities where all LGBTQ people live in health, wellness, safety, and prosperity.”

The LGBTQ Center Long Beach supports more than 25,000 people a year through programs including youth services, senior services, counseling, legal services, domestic violence support, trans health programs, HIV and STI testing, and more than 20 weekly support groups. Currently many of these services are offered online during the pandemic. Drive up and walk-up HIV/STI testing is now available by appointment Monday through Friday in a private area of the parking lot behind The Center at 2017 E. 4th Street in Long Beach. For more information on services, visit www.centerlb.org or follow @CenterLB on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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