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## In the spirit of fellowship and goodwill, the LGBTQ Center Long Beach offers free holiday meals to “grab and go”

**Long Beach, CA (December 16, 2021)** – LGBTQ people are more likely than their non-LGBTQ counterparts to experience stress, anxiety, and depression during the holiday season according to the National Alliance of Mental Illness. This season, the LGBTQ Center Long Beach wants community members to know fellowship and good cheer are available to them. On Friday, December 24 from 12:00pm – 4:00 pm, The Center will hold a festive and free Christmas meal giveaway in front of its building at 2017 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Long Beach while supplies last. Volunteer elves will be rocking out to Christmas songs and karaoke while participants can “grab and go” their meals from Long Beach’s Breakfast Bar or hang out for some caroling. The Center will also include a special gift with each meal package. This holiday meal is made possible with donations and support from Supervisor Janice Hahn and local businesses in Long Beach.

"We want to make sure that everyone in the LGBTQ community feels a connection with others during the holidays. Chosen family, or not, we all deserve to be part of something special," said Ismael Salamanca, director of Health Services at The LGBTQ Center Long Beach.

The Center has a staff of trained mental health therapists who work on a sliding scale throughout the year. Call 562-434-4455 ext. 228 for an intake consultation or visit [www.CenterLB.org](http://www.CenterLB.org).

“No one needs to be alone” notes Carlos Torres, executive director of The Center. “We are there if you or a loved one needs help.”

The LGBTQ Center Long Beach supports more than 25,000 people a year through programs including youth and family services, older adult services, mental health 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. HIV/STI testing is available by appointment Monday through Friday in

The Center at 2017 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Long Beach. For more information on services, visit [CenterLB.org](http://CenterLB.org) or follow @CenterLB on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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