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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

San Francisco Human Rights Commission Executive Director Invited by the LGBT Core Group of the United Nations to Speak and Participate in a Panel Discussion with International LGBT Leaders as Part of International Human Rights Day Commemoration at the UN

SFHRC Executive Director Theresa Sparks to join international panel to discuss her leadership to further transgender empowerment, provide insight on her experience as a transgender parent and the evolution of traditional familial dynamics, roles, and relationships within the LGBT community.

(**San Francisco**) The San Francisco Human Rights Commission's (SFHRC) Executive Director Theresa Sparks has been invited to offer initial remarks and participate with an international LGBT delegation in a panel discussion at the United Nations in New York City in commemoration of International Human Rights Day. Sparks was invited by the LGBT Core Group to serve on a panel at the UN Headquarters to discuss her current role in human rights advocacy for the LGBT Community and her experience as a transgender parent.

Regarding her invitation to participate in this prestigious event Sparks noted, "I consider this a lifetime opportunity that is both an honor and a privilege. I am deeply honored to join with other international human rights advocates to not only speak to the importance of being free to live authentically as transgender and what it means to be a transgender parent but to also participate in bringing global attention to the lived-experience of transgender people everywhere. Worldwide, the Transgender Community continues to be plagued by bigotry, intolerance and unspeakable violence; in most instances these acts being perpetrated with impunity. I am equally proud to represent the City of San Francisco whose long-standing legacy for advancing equality and human rights continues to have an inextricable impact toward global acceptance and equality for the LGBT Community."

"San Francisco is a world class City with diverse communities that represent people from around the world," said Mayor Ed Lee. "Our City is often regarded as being on the forefront in leading the way toward ensuring equality and acceptance for all people. San Francisco is the birthplace of the United Nations, and I am proud San Francisco will be well-represented at this event to commemorate International Human Rights Day and acknowledge our commitment to equality for the LGBT community on the global stage."

Sparks will participate in a panel discussion entitled "Love is a family value: protection of family members in all families in an age of diversity." The event, hosted by the LGBT Core Group, is a grouping of 15 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, El Salvador, France, Israel, Japan, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay), the European Union, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, and the civil society organizations Human Rights Watch and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC).

The LGBT Core Group has for several years celebrated international human rights day at the United Nations with a large-scale event with civil society and high-profile speakers from several countries.

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Last year's event, focused on LGBT persons and sports. In September 2014, the group organized a high-level event during the opening of the General Assembly which focused on LGBT Rights with remarks from the foreign ministers of Argentina and the Netherlands, as well as the Secretary of State of the United States Hillary Rodham Clinton.

International Human Rights Day will be observed on Wednesday, December 10th 2014.

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