

For Immediate Release
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Lesbian and Gay Community Appeal Celebrates 25 Years of Community Building

First-ever Award Recognizes Leaders in Gay and Lesbian Community

TORONTO – More than 300 community leaders and special guests celebrated the Lesbian and Gay Community Appeal's 25th anniversary and honoured long-time community activists George Hislop and Beverly Bain at a star-studded gala tonight at the Carlu.

"This is an amazing moment in our history," said LGCA co-chair Beth Jordan. "We could not have made a difference in the past 25 years without the tremendous support from the community that was evident tonight."

"We're thrilled that so many people could join us in our celebration, making it a huge success," said LGCA co-chair David Brownstone. "We're confident that we will be around to strengthen our community for another 25 years."

The LGCA is a unique Canadian foundation, raising funds through an annual giving program and other special initiatives. Since 1980, the LGCA has provided \$1.5 million for worthwhile community projects, all raised from individuals in the community.

"Appeal 25- Honouring Our Past, Building Our Future" is a highlight of this year's fundraising campaign and was supported by several community groups and leaders, including presenting sponsor CIBC and Honorary Chair Salah Bachir.

The celebration – featuring singer Molly Johnson, African drummer group Le Groupe des Arts Bassan, and comedienne Maggie Cassella – also included honouring George Hislop and Beverly Bain with a special award named after the late Jonathan R. Steinert and Fernando G. Ferreiro, two long-time supporters of the LGCA, who made a \$288,000 bequest to the LGCA. Thanks to their legacy, a cash award of \$12,500 each was presented to Bain and posthumously to Hislop who passed away earlier this year. The award is the largest LGBT community cash award in Canada.

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Bain has been a tireless activist and educator for equality rights for lesbians, gays and women of colour. She is currently a consultant on the City of Toronto's Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Sexual Assault Audit recommendations coming out of the Jane Doe successful lawsuit. Bain is currently a part-time community college instructor and teaches courses in Sexual Diversity and Sociology. She is also a graduate student in the Department of Women's Studies at York University.

Hislop was perhaps best known nationally for leading a class action under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms seeking pension benefits for same-sex survivors under the Canadian Pension Plan. Prior to that, Hislop was a key figure in the gay rights movement for decades.

The gala also presented the Bill 7 Awards, which were established in 1988 to provide financial support to lesbian and gay students in postsecondary education in Ontario. The award is administered by Supporting Our Youth and governed by a board of trustees and is named after the 1986 Ontario legislation that extended the protection of the Human Rights Code to lesbians and gays.

The LGCA is in the midst of its annual fundraising campaign. Last year, the LGCA allocated \$51,500 to support 32 projects, ranging from a grant to the Thornhill Secondary School Gay-Straight Alliance, to organize Pride Week in April and produce a multi-school conference promoting equity and inclusiveness for LGBTT students to supporting the Chinese Canadian National Council, in promoting its Equal Marriage Campaign in the Chinese community.

To donate, or for more information, visit www.lgca.ca or call (416) 920-5422.

Media contact:
James Ip
(416) 571-7247