

THE CENTER ORANGE COUNTY ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION OF
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUGLAS M. WEISS

Garden Grove, January 27, 2003 -- The Gay & Lesbian Community Services Center of Orange County (The Center) announces the resignation of Executive Director Douglas M. Weiss, effective March 15, 2003. Weiss has been a visionary leader and a prodigious fundraiser for the agency for the past six years, and he will be greatly missed. He has asked that the community join him for his farewell address at The Center's Gala Celebration on March 15th. All are invited to share this special evening and acknowledge his contributions to the community.

With more than a decade of non-profit organization experience, Weiss became Executive Director of The Center in 1997. Since that time, he has led the agency on a path of unprecedented growth and expansion to become one of the five largest gay and lesbian centers in America. The Center has become one of the most cost effective not-for-profit corporations in the United States, returning 90 cents of every dollar to program services, assuring its generous donors that their trust and commitment are well founded.

Under Weiss's guidance, the agency's budget nearly quadrupled to over \$2.3 million, with similar dramatic growth in staff, board, and the creation of an Advisory Board. It was under his leadership that The Center created the Reserve Fund, securing the agency's long-term future.

Weiss's leadership also brought unprecedented expansion to the physical size of the agency. In July 2000, The Center obtained funding from the State Office of AIDS, administered by the Orange County Health Care Agency, to open a 4,500 square foot Youth Drop-In Center (YDIC) to provide essential services for youth at especially high risk for HIV/AIDS. In 2002, the agency received a two-year, \$73,000 grant from the California Wellness Foundation to provide additional funding for the YDIC. In 2001, the agency opened a community CyberCenter with funding from the David Bohnett and California Technology Foundations, and these two were recently joined by a third major CyberCenter partner, Macromedia. In 2003, The Center premiered a 2,300 square foot Wellness Center to address the unique health needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) and HIV/AIDS-affected communities in Orange County.

During his tenure, Weiss focused on building a foundation of collaboration and partnerships locally, statewide, and nationally. He led The Center to become one of the largest providers of LGBT tobacco prevention and control in the world, even as he worked to retain the agency's many existing LGBT services and HIV/AIDS prevention programs. As a member of the Executive Board of the National Association of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Centers (NALGBTCC), he coordinated a historic collaborative effort among the eight largest LGBT Community Centers in the U.S. to obtain a \$1.8 million, five year agreement with the Centers for Disease Control. That effort resulted in an ongoing funded program to develop and implement a tobacco prevention and control model for the adult LGBT community nationwide.

In 2001, Weiss was instrumental in obtaining a three-year, \$750,000 grant to conduct tobacco control interventions among young adults in

Orange County. A 2002 collaboration with the Billy DeFrank Lesbian and Gay Community Center in San Jose, California, led to a 18-month contract to do an anti-tobacco media campaign within the LGBT community and propelled The Center to become one of the few LGBT projects funded by the American Legacy Foundation.

Additional Center programs initiated during Weiss's leadership include: Center Connection newsletter; HealthWISE (Women's Information Support and Education); Orange County's first-ever Dyke March; Domestic Partner registration events; Syphilis testing; Positive Access; Center website; and NALGBTCC website. He presided over the most successful Gala events in The Center's history, including the 25th and 30th anniversary celebrations.

Weiss has been living with HIV for most of his adult life and has provided years of leadership and mentoring as an elected member of the HIV Planning Council, the group responsible for needs assessment and prioritization of need under the Ryan White Care Act. His tireless advocacy efforts helped facilitate open dialogue and communications among the many diverse constituencies of people affected by HIV in Orange County.

He will be retiring from professional public service and moving to Rochester, New York, to be closer to his family and many life-long friends. He plans to become active in his new community as a volunteer.

Weiss's courage, dedication and commitment to The Center and to the entire LGBT community of Orange County have provided many examples of what can be achieved in the face of great challenges, and the agency's staff, board members, and volunteers are grateful for his leadership. All of them wish him the best in his future endeavors.

For more information about The Center's Gala Celebration on March 15, please contact Veronica Zerrer at (714) 534-0862, ext. 120, or e-mail her at vzerrer@thecenteroc.org

The mission of The Center is to provide services to ensure the physical, psychological, and social well being of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS affected community. These services include activities intended to foster community respect, understanding, and acceptance of gender, cultural diversity, and sexual orientation. For more information about the programs of The Center, call (714) 534-0862 or visit the Center's website at www.thecenteroc.org.

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