



Greater Palm Springs Pride

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Grand Marshals Announced for 25th Annual Palm Springs Pride Celebration

### *Anti-Bullying Activist Caleb Laieski Tops List*

*(Palm Springs, CA – September 26, 2011)* Greater Palm Springs Pride honors anti-bullying activist, business leader, community volunteers and local celebrities as grand marshals in the 25th annual Pride Parade, scheduled for 10:00a.m., Sunday, November 6th, along Palm Canyon Drive through the heart of Downtown Palm Springs.

Serving as grand marshal is 16 year old anti-bullying activist Caleb Laieski from Surprise, Arizona. Community grand marshals are business woman Mindy Reed, and the founders of Palm Springs Front Runners and Walkers Lee Walton and Phil Catalli. Joining them as celebrity grand marshals are radio personalities Bill Feingold and Kevin Holmes.

“We are thrilled at the opportunity of honoring such inspiring individuals who have made a positive, lasting impact on our community, advocate for our youth and embody the spirit of volunteerism.” stated Ron deHarte, Palm Springs Pride Executive Vice President.

**Caleb Laieski** has gained national attention as a young activist who, since coming out in the 8th grade, experienced almost daily bullying and harassment from his classmates because of his sexual orientation. Caleb has been fighting ever since to make authorities respond to the problem of bullying of LGBT students with measures to prevent it as well as support the needs of victims.

When a freshman in high school, an older boy, shouting homophobic slurs, threatened to stab Caleb, and when he complained to school administrators, nothing was done. Later, the same bully drove his car onto the sidewalk where Caleb and his friends were standing. That was the last straw for Caleb. He dropped out of high school and earned his GED.



Caleb founded Gays and Lesbians United Against Discrimination at age 13 and has advocated for improved measures to fight discrimination at the local, state and national level. Taking the cause to Capitol Hill, he promoted a safe schools bill during visits to almost 200 congressional offices in twenty-two days.

Early this year Caleb was invited to the White House inaugural Conference on Bullying Prevention and met with President Obama. He shared his experiences and proposed that the president appoint a gay youth advisor to help with decisions pertaining to LGBT youth.

Community grand marshal **Mindy Reed** is a successful entrepreneur, firm believer in equal rights and an active community member. In 2010 and 2011 she participated in the AIDS LifeCycle Ride, a seven day cycling event from San Francisco to Los Angeles to raise money for the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center and the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. A top 25 fundraiser both years, she raised over \$24,000 for the rides.



The owner of Zin American Bistro and Zini Cafe Mediterraneo, Reed supports the Human Rights Campaign and Equality California and frequently hosts fundraisers and participates in charity events like the Palm Springs Food and Wine Festival, Restaurant Week, Dining Out for Life, Food and Wine Festival Palm Desert and the Pendleton Foundation. She has also raised funds for Kids with MIA, Palm Springs High School Art Institute, Food & Wine Festival Palm Desert, Stroke Recovery Center, Mizell Senior Center and Palm Springs Opera Guild.

Community grand marshals **Lee Walton and Phil Catalli** met in the San Francisco Bay area and legally married in July 2008. They moved to Palm Springs in 1997 and found there were no organized athletic, healthful organizations for the LGBT community. Their solution was to organize a Front Runners and Walkers chapter in their new hometown. Today the club has had more than 1,500 members.



Palm Springs Front Runners and Walkers promote fitness and social activities and actively raise funds for nonprofit organizations. The list of beneficiaries includes Desert AIDS Project, AIDS Assistance Program, and Guide Dogs of the Desert, Animal Samaritans, Gay Associated Youth, Mizell Senior Center, Caballeros, Desert Winds Freedom Band, Golden Rainbow Center, and PFLAG.

Celebrity grand marshals **Bill Feingold and Kevin Holmes** were voted “Best of the Valley” radio personalities by readers of *The Desert Sun* for the past two years, Bulldog Bill Feingold and Kevin Holmes entertain thousands of listeners weeknights on 94.3 KNews FM in Palm Springs. Bill and



Kevin frequently welcome representatives of organizations like the Desert AIDS Project, McCallum Theatre and AIDS Assistance Program to the air. Many entertainers including Johnny Mathis, Robert Wagner, Lily Tomlin, Jim J. Bullock, and Esai Morales have made their way to the Feingold Show.

Feingold and Holmes also frequently emcee or take part in a variety of community service activities including the annual galas for The Living Desert and Mizell Senior Center.

## **About Greater Palm Springs Pride:**

The Greater Palm Springs Pride organization ( [www.pspride.org](http://www.pspride.org) ) is a non-profit organization founded to promote the public education and public awareness of individual rights and civil liberties of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and to promote the history, diversity and future prosperity of the Greater Palm Springs LGBT community.

This year's pride parade will begin at 10:00 on Sunday, November 6th. Step-off for more than 125 groups and 3,000 participants will take place at Ramon and Palm Canyon Dr. For further media inquiries please contact J. Hocker & Associates 760-320-5272. For information regarding Palm Springs Pride and Pride Week 2011 events, please visit our website at [www.pspride.org](http://www.pspride.org). Follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/PalmSprings.Pride](http://www.facebook.com/PalmSprings.Pride).

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