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STATE LGBT LEADERS MEET IN OHIO TO DISCUSS MOVEMENT STRATEGIES

Columbus, Ohio – On Sunday, 120 leaders of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender civil rights movement from 34 state organizations and 21 allied groups departed Columbus after four days of workshops, strategic conversations and networking at Equality Federation's 11th Annual Summer Meeting. Hosted this year by Federation member organization Equality Ohio, the Summer Meeting is the largest gathering of leadership in the lgbt movement.

"State organizing and advocacy work is critical to our movement's ability to achieve full civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans," said Federation executive director Toni Broaddus. "Our state leaders founded Equality Federation to ensure that our state organizations have the resources necessary to do their work, and our annual Summer Meeting is the place that we gather to learn from each other, to plan our strategies for success, and to build a national agenda for lgbt equality."

The Equality Agenda is the Federation's emerging plan for lgbt equality in every state. The Agenda is defined by the work of our state organizations and based on what we know is achievable in each state. It covers the entire range of issues important to lgbt people, including equality in the workplace, in housing, in our schools, and for our families. State goals for affirmative legislation in the states include all members of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

At the Summer Meeting, Equality Federation member organizations elected their board of directors and board officers for 2008-2009 terms. Members of the board include: Mo Baxley of New Hampshire Freedom to Marry and a New Hampshire State Representative; Howard Bayless, the first openly gay man elected to office in Alabama; Alexis Blizman of Equality New Mexico; Lynne Bowman of Equality Ohio; Jeana Frazzini of Basic Rights Oregon; Ross Levi of Empire State Pride Agenda in New York; Ian Palmquist of Equality North Carolina; Paul Scott of Equality Texas; Sharon Semmens of Georgia; Marc Solomon of MassEquality; Mark St. John of Indiana Equality; Rhonda White of Tennessee Equality Project; and Deon Young of the Milwaukee LGBT Center.

Board officers for 2008-2009 are: Lynne Bowman, Equality Federation Chair; Howard Bayless, Equality Federation Institute Chair; Deon Young, EF Vice Chair; Alexis Blizman, EFI Chair; Ross Levi, EF and EFI Secretary; and Paul Scott, EF and EFI Treasurer.

"I am pleased and excited to serve a second term as Chair of the Equality Federation board of Directors," said Lynne Bowman, executive director of Equality Ohio, this year's Summer Meeting host organization. "Equality Federation has been critical to the growth and increasing success of Equality Ohio and of all of our state organizations across the country."

The Summer Meeting ended with the presentation of the Feddie Awards to state organizations that submitted specific strategies and achievements over the past year.

State groups recognized for outstanding achievements by their peers were: Empire State Pride Agenda, Equality Arizona, Equality Ohio, and Garden State Equality (New Jersey).

Key national and regional allies of state work sponsored the Summer Meeting, including: the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force; Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN); Lambda Legal; Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Discrimination (GLAAD); Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG); Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD); and Rockway Institute.

Equality Federation works to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in every state and territory by building strong and sustainable statewide organizations in a state-based movement. For more information and a complete list of Federation member organizations in the states, visit our website at www.equalityfederation.org.

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