

International LGBT Family Organizations Announce "International Family Equality Day" for 2012

Lesbian and gay family equality activists from around the world, hosted by R Family Vacations, met in Florida for a week of discussions in the first ever International Symposium of LGBT Family Organizations. The group of American, European and Canadian organizations decided on several cooperation initiatives, and the establishment of an "International Family Equality Day" to take place on May 6, 2012.

New York, NY ([PRWEB](#)) July 29, 2011 -- The movement for equal treatment of LGBT-headed families took another significant step forward with the first ever International Symposium of LGBT Family Organizations which took place in Florida on July 9-16, 2011. The symposium was part of an effort to increase international cooperation among LGBT family organizations worldwide, led by [Family Equality Council](#), America's foremost advocate for LGBT families, the Network of European LGBT Families Associations ([NELFA](#)) and the Canadian [LGBT Parenting Network](#) based in Toronto.

The symposium was hosted by the gay and lesbian family travel company [R Family Vacations](#), as part of their week-long international vacation at Club Med Sandpiper resort in Florida. NELFA representatives from several European countries, along with Canadian representatives, joined Americans from Family Equality Council in hosting several workshops and a public panel about "LGBT Families Around the World." Facilitated by Jennifer Chrisler, executive director of Family Equality Council, the panel examined successes and challenges in the social and political realm across different cultures. Parents from around the world shared what it is like to be an LGBT family in their respective countries, including their experience at schools, places of worship, and when accessing government and medical services. Marion Gret from France, one of NELFA's founders, indicated that "the goal of the symposium is to help foster a sense of global community among our families, to increase our visibility and raise awareness about the challenges we face for social and legal acceptance". Jennifer Chrisler added, "Beyond the symposium and a number of formal workshops, the week in Florida provided an opportunity to brainstorm and decide on future cooperation in areas such as research, visibility and advocacy, and the development of resources and programs for LGBT families worldwide." Stemming out of the conference will be on-going cooperation between the LGBT parenting organizations in the USA, Europe and Canada, starting with the establishment of an "International Family Equality Day" to take place on May 6, 2012, to celebrate LGBT families across the world.

This unprecedented international exchange and cooperation was made possible by the formation in recent years of many new LGBT family organizations around the world. While strong organizations in places like the US, Canada, Germany, France and Scandinavia have been around for a decade or more, and already represent tens of thousands families, many new "Rainbow Families" organizations have been created in recent years in countries such as the UK, Italy, Switzerland, and Israel. Regardless of different legal, political and social circumstances, the dramatic increase in the numbers of LGBT people who choose to raise children is a global phenomenon. Witnessing this trend at the vacations R Family has been organizing since 2003, founders Gregg Kaminsky and Kelli Carpenter decided to host an international gathering at their 2011 summer vacations at Club Med in Florida. "When we started R Family, we addressed the need for LGBT families in the U.S. to meet other families just like them," said Gregg, "but in recent years we realized that we are in a position to bring people together from all over the world." "We made some introductions between Family Equality Council and our European and Canadian friends," reported Kelli, "and before long we were taking part in a series of multi-



party trans-atlantic video conferences." These conferences resulted in an invitation by R Family to host all the parties in Florida for further discussions and the symposium.

About Family Equality Council

Family Equality Council is America's foremost advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender family equality. Family Equality Council represents the one million LGBT families raising two million children in the United States and is working to ensure full social and legal equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families.

More information: <http://www.FamilyEquality.org>

About the Network of European LGBT Families Organizations (NELFA)

The Network of European LGBT Families Associations (NELFA) was created in May 2009 to bring together the associations of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and their children from European nations under one European organization to represent LGBT/Rainbow Families. Since its formation NELFA grew from 7 founding members to 18 associations from 13 different countries.

More information: <http://www.NELFA.org>

About the LGBT Parenting Network

The LGBTQ Parenting Network (PN) is a network of Canadian organizations supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer parents, prospective parents and their families. It does so through education, advocacy, research, social networking and community organizing.

More information: <http://www.lgbtqparentingconnection.ca>

About R Family Vacations

R Family Vacations is the premiere travel company designed especially for gays, lesbians and their friends and families from around the world. Since it was founded in 2003 by Gregg Kaminsky and Kelli Carpenter, R Family hosted over 15,000 people on more than a dozen vacations aboard cruise ships and in resorts worldwide. It offers unique itineraries, diverse fun and educational programs for kids and adults, incredible Broadway-style shows for all, and some unique comedy just for adults. More information: <http://www.rFamilyVacations.com>

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