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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Boulder Pride spearheads and completes the first “Last Drag” smoking cessation class for lesbian, bi and transgender women in the United States

Boulder Pride trailblazes new ground in its commitment to provide LGBTQ culturally competent tobacco cessation programming for its constituents

BOULDER, CO – Boulder Pride, Colorado state’s second largest gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (GLBTQ) advocacy and empowerment organization, is proud to announce the successful completion of the first-ever women only “Last Drag” smoking cessation class. The class, which attracted a high number of participants, is the first of its kind to be offered in the United States.

According to national research findings, the GLBT community is approximately 40% to 70% more likely to smoke than non GLBT individuals. Tobacco kills more GLBT people every year than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, suicides, illegal drugs, homicides, and fires combined.

“Boulder Pride is just thrilled we are able to offer this type of innovative programming to our community members,” states Kirsten Spielmann, Boulder Pride Interim Executive Director. Spielmann continues, “When we saw the numbers indicating high tobacco use rates among women in our community, we knew we had to take action.” Spielmann adds, “Understanding the cultural history of our community, we designed our class to be about friendships, openness and unconditional group support. Some cessation classes are high pressure, judgmental and rather punitive in their approach and we didn’t want to create that kind of atmosphere. What Boulder Pride sincerely hopes is this class was able to save lives.”

Based on “Freedom from Smoking” offered by the American Lung Association and designed by the California LGBT Tobacco Education Partnership, “The Last Drag” is a GLBT culturally competent eight week smoking cessation class designed for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and HIV + smokers, which started in San Francisco, California.

Due to the high rates of lesbian, bisexual female and transgender women smokers in Boulder County, as determined from an extensive community needs assessment performed last year, Boulder Pride decided to hold the first ever women only “Last Drag” class. The class was designed specifically for lesbian, bisexual, transgender identified and heterosexual allied women in mind.

The first class, which started right after the New Year, was comprised of 14 lesbian, bisexual, questioning and straight ally women participants from Boulder County, who came together to quit tobacco. The class’s official meetings concluded on Tuesday, February 26 with a potluck dinner to celebrate the successes of the women in the group. The class participants, some of whom had smoked for over 40 years, have already made plans to get together again in the near future to provide each other with extra support as they continue their quest to rid their lives of tobacco. Class participants figured out they had smoked a total of 216 years collectively. In an

extra effort, to make sure “Last Drag” participants “stay quit,” Boulder Pride is sponsoring the group to attend a yoga class and to also participate in a sensory gourmet food night. The sensory celebration will be led by a professional chef who will discuss the importance of having healthy taste buds. The women will be invited to taste a range of gourmet foods and celebrate their improved sense of taste since quitting tobacco.

The Last Drag classes were led by a professional lesbian counselor who lives in Boulder and the classes were funded through a state grant administered through the GLBT Center of Colorado as part of its SmokeFree GLBT initiative. SmokeFree GLBT is a statewide effort to reduce chronic disease and death directly related to tobacco use in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities in Colorado. Learn more about all SmokeFree GLBT tobacco programs in Colorado at www.smokefreeglbt.org. Boulder Pride hopes to hold another “Last Drag” class in the future.

For more information about Boulder Pride's SmokeFree GLBT program or future “Last Drag” classes please contact Boulder Pride at 303-499-5777 kirsten@boulderpride.org.

ABOUT BOULDER PRIDE:

Our Vision is to cultivate a visible, inclusive, and empowered Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning Community in order to achieve equality, respect, and well-being for all LGBTQ people in Boulder County.

Our Mission is to foster safe environments for our community for gathering, support, self-expression, and the exchange of ideas; to advocate for social justice; to build collaborative relationships within the community at large; to celebrate the uniqueness, diversity, and contributions of our community; to provide direct services for both youth and adults; and to educate the public and the LGBTQ community about the issues and concerns affecting our lives.

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