

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 6, 2011

Contacts:

Ben Cartwright

619-316-9197

benny.bc.cartwright@gmail.com

Ricky Cervantes

209-747-5517

ricky.rc.cervantes@gmail.com

Lesbian star of “The Real Housewives of Orange County” to join in San Diego’s annual remembrance of Matthew Shepard on Oct. 11

SAN DIEGO -- Fernanda Rocha, who made history as the first lesbian cast member on the Bravo network reality show *The Real Housewives of Orange County*, will visit San Diego on Tuesday, Oct. 11 to participate in the fourth annual San Diego Remembers Matthew Shepard candlelight vigil and celebration.

The Brazilian born fitness enthusiast, business mogul, and LGBT rights activist will join in the candlelit march, which kicks off at 7 pm from the Village Hillcrest Plaza at 3965 Fifth Ave. The group will proceed to the San Diego LGBT Community Center (3909 Centre St.) where an empowerment celebration will take place and include music by DJ John Joseph, entertainment, food provided by The Range, community information tables, and remarks from Rocha.

As the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community celebrates a number of important civil rights advances such as the repeal of Dont Ask, Dont Tell, *San Diego Remembers* has kept in mind that acts of hate are still perpetuated against this community and has planned the event to stand up against hate while empowering community members to get involved and fight back.

Event organizers have intentionally made this year’s event different from past events with the goal of empowering people to get involved in the fight against hate, rather than the traditional solemn march and ceremony.

Created by local community activists Ben Cartwright and Ricky Cervantes in 2008, the pair founded San Diego Remembers to remind the community that hate still exists and that the community needs to continue to work to end it.

“We hope that people will leave the event with a desire to help combat hate, which is the root of so many of our community’s challenges”, said Cartwright.

Over 400 people attended the 2010 event, with many expressing a desire to get involved with community activism but not knowing where to start or how to get involved.

“The celebratory feel of this event is designed to inspire people to want to take a stand and not be afraid of the word 'activism' - we all need to do our part to make sure that no one else's life is cut short

like Matthew Shepard's or the many other young people who have taken their lives because of bullying," said Cervantes.

The event will also include a presentation by San Diegan Edward Camarillo who knew Shepard personally, and information about the campaign to save SB 48 - The FAIR Education Act.

Candles and purple ribbons will be provided, however participants are encouraged to bring their own to help defray costs. Participants are also encouraged to wear purple.

Major sponsors include Grindr for Equality, Grindr, San Diego Gay & Lesbian News, San Diego PIX, the NO H8 Campaign, Babycakes, Bourbon Street, The Range, and Global Male Productions.

For more information or to schedule an interview with event organizers contact Cartwright or Cervantes. To schedule an interview with Rocha contact Nichole Brandt at 310-300-0950 x 303 or by email at nbrandt@lcoonline.com.

###

San Diego Remembers is a non-profit organization founded in 2008 to remember the lives lost to hate violence and empower community members to get involved in the fight against hate. The group annually organizes the San Diego Remembers Matthew Shepard remembrance march and ceremony and works on other smaller projects throughout the year. More information is available at www.sandiegoremembers.com.