

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHICAGO FIRE SOCCER TEAM PARTNERS WITH EQUALITY ILLINOIS

CHICAGO -- Equality Illinois, the state's oldest and largest LGBT advocacy organization, and the Chicago Fire, Chicago's Major League Soccer team, are partnering at a number of events this summer, leading up to the Chicago Fire Pride Night on August 4.

The next major event together is a very special Equality Illinois First Friday social networking cocktail party this Friday, July 6, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., Chicago, that will feature two Chicago Fire stars, Gonzalo Segares and Jay Nolly. (Photos available upon request.)

"We are excited that this relationship will yield so many benefits for Equality Illinois, the Chicago Fire, and especially the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and our allies," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois. "Most importantly, this support from a major pro-sports team signals to fans and LGBT youth the diverse voices that embrace equality."

The partnership was launched during the Chicago Pride Parade on Sunday, June 24, when representatives of the Chicago Fire organization marched along with the Equality Illinois float with its "I Do" support marriage equality theme, getting an enthusiastic response from the estimated 850,000 parade viewers along the route.

At First Friday, for a \$10 donation to the Equality Illinois PAC, participants receive two drink tickets and a door prize drawing ticket. Giveaways will include Chicago Fire items, "I DO" t-shirts, and many other great prizes.

Other events after First Friday will include the Celebrity Pie Toss on July 28, also at Sidetrack, when several members from the Chicago Fire will join other celebrities on the receiving end of pies thrown by the highest bidders, whose contributions will aid Equality Illinois programs.

The events all lead up to the Chicago Fire Pride Night at their game on August 4 at Toyota Park in Bridgeview, when a portion of ticket sale proceeds that night will go to benefit the work of the Equality Illinois Education Project.

"We greatly appreciate the generosity of the entire Chicago Fire organization," said Michael Nordman, Director of Development at Equality Illinois. "The time and resources they are devoting to this partnership is another great example of how local organizations can step up and showcase support for diversity and equality."



Mailing Address
3318 N. Halsted Street
Chicago, IL 60657

Phone
773-477-7173
Fax
773-477-6912
E-mail
info@eqil.org
Web
www.equalityillinois.org