



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Celebrity Couple Chef Art Smith and Artist Jesus Salgueiro
Co-Chair Equality Illinois Gala**

CHICAGO – Equality Illinois today proudly announces that Chicago's nationally recognized gay married couple, chef Art Smith and artist Jesus Salgueiro, are the co-chairs of the 2013 Justice for All Equality Illinois Gala.

Smith, an award-winning chef and TV star, has cooked for everyone from Oprah Winfrey and Lady Gaga to President Obama, authored cookbooks, and with his husband launched Common Threads, a charity that teaches kids from low-income families how to prepare healthy and delicious food.

"Art and Jesus are a wonderful, heartwarming example for Illinois, having dedicated their love and lifelong commitment to each other in marriage. However, their marriage could not be performed in their home state—they were married in Washington, DC in 2010—because of the discriminatory law here," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, the state's oldest, largest and most effective LGBT advocacy organization. "We thank them for their willingness to lend their names, time and talent to our gala."

Smith and Salgueiro have frequently donated their energies and used their public platform to make the case against discrimination and for treating everyone with equal respect and dignity. For instance this summer the couple hosted a "Chicken Fry for Equality" in their home in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood to benefit Equality Illinois and speak out against the anti-marriage equality sentiments of the Chick-fil-A restaurant chain CEO.

"Marriage equality is happening and anti-equality legislation will soon be written only in the history books along with Jim Crow laws," Smith wrote in a Time magazine essay last August. "The work we do now is cooking up a more just, loving world for the next generation, a generation that embraces two of the most important things in my life — marriage equality and great food — and there's no room for hate in either."

The 2013 Justice for All Equality Illinois Gala is Saturday, February 9 in the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave. In addition to the fine dining experience, the gala will feature a slew of public officials, the annual silent auction featuring hundreds of glamorous items, and dancing till midnight.

As gala co-chair, Smith, will work with the host hotel on developing a menu for the more than 1,000 expected guests at what is annually the Midwest's largest formal event benefiting the fight for equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

"In addition to their busy careers, Art and Jesus are involved in many charitable endeavors, so for them to volunteer for the Justice for All Equality Illinois Gala is indicative of the importance they place on achieving our shared goals of fairness and equality," Cherkasov said.



Chef Art Smith (on right) and husband Jesus Salgueiro are co-chairs of the 2013 Justice for All Equality Illinois Gala on Feb. 9 in the Hilton Chicago. (Photo/Kipling Swehla Photography)