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**SAN DIEGO LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER ANNOUNCES SELECTION  
OF CAROLINE DESSERT AS NEXT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

***Board of Directors Completes Eight-Month Intensive National Search Process***

MARCH 15, 2018 – SAN DIEGO -- The San Diego LGBT Community Center’s Board of Directors has announced the selection of Caroline (Cara) Dessert as its next Chief Executive Officer.

“We are thrilled to name Cara Dessert as our next chief executive officer,” said Joyce Rowland, co-chair of The Center’s Board of Directors and chair of the executive search committee.

“The board also wants to convey our thanks to all the community members who participated in the search process and provided direct input into the qualities they wanted to see in our next chief executive,” Rowland said. “After a rigorous, inclusive and thorough national search process, the board is confident that Cara is the right person to lead The Center through this next chapter of our organization’s incredible history.”

Since 2016, Dessert has served as The Center’s Chief Development and Community Engagement Officer. A queer Latina, Dessert is an attorney and non-profit executive with 15 years in social justice leadership. She previously served as the executive director of Immigration Equality, a national organization focused on LGBT immigrant rights.

She served in the California Department of Justice in the Office of the Attorney General, with the U.S. Central District Court, and with California’s Fair Employment and Housing Commission. From 2007-2009, Dessert was The Center’s public policy and community organizing coordinator, and a lead field organizer for the No on 8/Equality for All campaign. She also worked for Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest.

Dessert completed her JD at University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Law, where she was the editor-in-chief of the Chicana/o Latina/o Law Review. She earned her BA at University of California-San Diego (UCSD). A native of El Centro, Dessert is married to Lisa Valenzuela, a local schoolteacher.

“I am deeply honored to have the opportunity to serve my community as the CEO of

The San Diego LGBT Community Center,” said Cara Dessert. “The Center has an impressive 45-year legacy providing service to and advocacy for our San Diego LGBT community. I am thrilled to join our incredible staff, board and our community to further strengthen the vital work of The Center now and in the years ahead.”

In April 2017, the board announced that Dr. Delores A. Jacobs would be retiring from her Center service in June 2018. The Center’s Board of Directors then formed a search committee and retained the services of McCormack + Kristel as consultants for a national executive search. Chaired by Rowland, the search committee also included Gil Cabrera, Joanna Clark, Kafele Khalfani, Lisa Nicole Sanders, Shaun Travers, Andrea Villa and Dale Kelly Bankhead.

The search and selection process included five phases, outlined and made public on The Center’s website by the board and search committee. Those phases were 1) Thoughtful Preparation and Community Input; 2) Recruitment; 3) Interviews and Selection; 4) Community Communication; and 5) Leadership Transition. More than 200 community members provided direct feedback to inform the search process. In addition, there were 10 focus groups conducted, which included Center clients, donors and other stakeholders. McCormack + Kristal also contacted more than 1,500 sources and prospects during the search process.

“We are so grateful for the committed leadership of Dr. Delores Jacobs, who, in keeping with her focus on long-term planning and visioning, provided the board with the time to engage in a truly deliberative process,” Rowland said. “We look forward to Cara having further opportunities to work with Delores to ensure a smooth and successful transition in leadership.”

After 17 years of leadership, Dr. Jacobs will officially complete her tenure on June 30, 2018, and Dessert will become chief executive officer effective July 1, 2018.

In the coming weeks, the board will announce the dates for a welcome reception with Dessert, as well as a community event to thank and recognize the work of Dr. Jacobs.

*The San Diego Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center, Inc. (The Center) is the nation's second oldest and one of the largest LGBT community centers. Functioning as the San Diego LGBT community's anchor organization, The Center is led by a 12-member board of directors, employs more than 55 paid staff and utilizes more than 1,200 community volunteers to achieve its twin goals of promoting LGBT health and human rights. The Center provides direct program services to the many different facets of the LGBT community, including youth, seniors, families, the LGBT Latin @ community members and their families, and those struggling with HIV. Last year, The Center provided more than 73,000 service visits to San Diego community members, and through its events, activities and advocacy, touched the lives of thousands more.*