



NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Groundbreaking Film Exploring the First Generation of LGBT Parents Celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

### **Showing and Reception Set for Sept. 14**

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(SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 12, 2010)—Twenty-five years after its premier, the groundbreaking documentary “Choosing Children”—the first film to explore and chronicle the journey taken by lesbians and gay men to become parents after they came out—will return to the silver screen at the Herbst Theater on Sept. 14 to celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The landmark film, produced by two Bay Area filmmakers, Academy Award winner Debra Chasnoff and Kim Klausner, was released in 1985, introducing viewers to the first generation of lesbians and gay men who chose to become parents after coming out, and contributed to an expanded definition of family that has since opened the doors for millions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people to become parents. “Before the early 1980s, it was just assumed that if you came out, you gave up the chance and the right to be a parent,” says Chasnoff. “But a small number of brave lesbians and gay men began to challenge that belief. With “Choosing Children” we wanted to share their stories with the world and inspire others that they, too, could redefine family for themselves.”

Chasnoff and Klausner conducted a nationwide search for lesbian-headed families that were navigating what was then a very new legal, political, and social terrain. Ultimately, they found six families who reflected some of the racial and ethnic diversity of our vibrant communities, and who had “chosen children” in different ways. Their stories provide an intimate look at the challenges and joys faced by this early generation of lesbian and gay parents in their quests to build their families—stories that are still fascinating and relevant today.

“Without the pioneering generation that we were able to capture in “Choosing Children,” none of us would have the rights or opportunities for creating families that we have today,” Klausner says. “It is almost beyond comprehension how much the political and social landscape has changed since we made the film.”

The film poignantly captures some of the important history that has contributed to today’s LGBT family rights victories, including the recent Proposition 8 decision by Judge Vaughn Walker here in California. It is partly why so many community groups are cosponsoring this evening celebration for LGBT families, our allies, prospective parents and others.

One of the arenas where the most significant advances have been made is the legal system. "The legal advances we have made for our families are nothing short of breathtaking," says National Center for Lesbian Rights Executive Director Kate Kendell. "These gains are largely due to this early generation of lesbians and gay parents, who charted a previously unseen path in order to become parents and raise children, becoming role models for LGBT people everywhere."

The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Screening and Reception includes a viewing, and remarks by Chasnoff, Klausner, and the Honorable Donna Hitchens, founder of the National Center for Lesbian Rights who is featured in the film, and dessert reception. The event is presented by the National Center for Lesbian Rights, Groundspark, COLAGE, Frameline, Equality California, Our Family Coalition, and PFLAG to celebrate the advances our movement has made in family law and society, and to raise funds to permanently preserve this historical film on DVD.

### **"Choosing Children" 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Screening and Reception**

**What:** "Choosing Children" 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration to raise funds to permanently preserve this historical film on DVD

**When:** 6:30 p.m. on September 14, 2010 (Program begins at 7 p.m.)

**Where:** Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness, San Francisco, CA

**Cost:** \$25 (regular admission); \$10 (student admission)

[Learn more and order tickets](#)

### **Presenting Partners**

GroundSpark, National Center for Lesbian Rights, Frameline, Children of Lesbian and Gays Everywhere, Our Family Coalition, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

### **Media interviews are available with:**

- "Choosing Children" producers Debra Chasnoff and Kim Klausner
- Families featured in the documentary
- National Center for Lesbian Rights founder Donna Hitchens
- National Center for Lesbian Rights Executive Director Kate Kendell

### **Original Reviews and Awards**

"With openness and disarming humor ... an educational film, in the best sense of the term. 'Choosing Children' speaks to the lesbian and gay community about possibilities for parenting, and to a wider public about the importance of understanding different ways of life."

*-Karen Rosenberg, The Boston Globe*

- Red Ribbon, American Film Festival
- Best Documentary, New England Film Festival
- Best Short Documentary, New York Gay and Lesbian Film Festival
- First Prize, National Educational Film Festival

### **About the Filmmakers**

After making "Choosing Children," Debra Chasnoff went on to direct many other political documentaries including the Academy-award winning "Deadly Deception—General Electric, Nuclear Weapons and Our Environment" and most recently "Straightlaced—How Gender's Got Us All Tied Up." She is president and senior producer at GroundSpark, the San Francisco-based film and education organization. Kim Klausner recently produced "Forever's Gonna Start Tonight," winner of the audience award for best documentary at this year's OUTFEST film festival. She manages digital libraries of previously secret tobacco and pharmaceutical

industry documents at the University of California, San Francisco. After making "Choosing Children," Chasnoff and Klausner had two children together, Noah who is now 22, and Oscar, who is 16.