

# Farm-Fresh Fundraising

HRC Portland channels *Portlandia* with second annual gala

BY ERIN ROOK

The Portland Steering Committee for the Human Rights Campaign is mixing things up for its second annual fundraising gala—or “anti-gala,” according to event co-chair Michael Long.

HRC Portland is taking it outside for a farm-fresh dinner held at Meriwether's Skyline Farm. Guests will feast on chicken and produce so fresh they can see it growing before their eyes while sipping on local and regional wines and signature cocktails featuring liquor from Bend Distillery.

“It's all about being local, fresh, sustainable and kooky,” Long says of the event inspired by the city's current pop culture ambassador, IFC comedy series *Portlandia*. Fittingly, one of the show's co-creators and stars, Fred Armisen (*Saturday Night Live*) will be a special guest at the gala, as will series guest stars Mayor Sam Adams and actress Edie McClurg (*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*).

“[The chicken] won't be Colin from *Portlandia*, but it will obviously be one of his relatives,” Long jokes.

In addition to Armisen, the event will include an appearance by U.S. Senator Ron Wyden, an early supporter of marriage equality and one of 14 senators to vote against the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996.

The evening will be hosted by 105.1 *The Buzz* radio personalities Daria O'Neill and Mitch Elliott (who came out on air in 2007) and producer Ted Douglass.

“Mitch is openly gay and Daria is a gay supporter,” Long says. “They're such great entertainers in general.”

Because the event is not only a benefit and social gathering, guests will also receive a



brief education in all things HRC, including an update on the organization's work around the country from HRC National Field Director Marty Rouse.

“We are bringing money together to use for the purposes best for our community,” Long says. In the past, some of the money has gone toward helping Basic Rights Oregon win domestic partnerships for Oregonians and contributing to the recent marriage equality victory in New York.

Next year will be a busy one, Long says, with marriage equality ballot measures likely in Oregon as well as Maine and a number of other states. The campaigns to win those measures will cost money, though Long emphasizes that education is just as important as fundraising.

“Our goal is to raise funds to do more work,” Long acknowledges. Still, “it's not about the dollar amount... We want to educate people about what's going on on the federal level.”

HRC's current federal priorities include marriage equality, the repeal of “Don't ask, don't tell” and employment non-discrimination.

“We're going to have a lot of things going on in 2012,” Long says. “It's a good time to be involved with our community.”

Fortunately, there are plenty of ways to get involved. For those who cannot attend the gala dinner, HRC is also hosting an after-party at Ford Food and Drink, which Long describes as “*Portlandia*-ish,” saying its SE 11th and Division location “could almost be the heart of *Portlandia*.” The party will feature music from local deejays Roy G. Biv (Bent, Blow Pony) and Mr. Charming (Gay-cation) as well as special cocktails.

All in all, the evening's events will be full

Left: Chef Earl Hook at Meriwether's Skyline Farm

Top: Hosts Mitch Elliott, Daria O'Neill, and Ted Douglass

Bottom: DJs Roy G Biv and Mr. Charming

of Portland spirit. Long says he hopes that the focus on his fair city will appeal to locals and visitors alike.

“The idea is that August is the best time to be in Oregon,” Long says. “We want to encourage people to come to Oregon to celebrate what we're doing here.”

HRC PORTLAND'S URBAN FARM DINNER GALA, Sat., Aug. 13, 5:30-9 p.m.; Meriwether Skyline Farms, 12735 NW Skyline Blvd.; \$125, \$175 for VIP, \$100 for students and seniors. After-Party, 9:30 p.m.-late; Ford Food & Drink, 2505 SE 11th; \$10, free with VIP ticket; 800-494-TLXS, HRCPortlandUrbanFarmGala@gmail.com or portland.hrc.org.

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