



Out & Equal To Honor Transparent At Momentum Gala

By Lisa Tedesco

March 16, 2015

The Golden-Globe winning, and groundbreaking, new television show, *Transparent*, will be honored by Out & Equal Workplace Advocates at their 8th annual fundraising gala, Momentum, held at the Hotel Nikko in San Francisco. Out & Equal stands to support the movement to help shape the future for equality in the workplace for the LGBT community across the world. Momentum is their annual gala, dinner and fundraiser, this year hosted by Kate Clinton. To accept the honor from *Transparent* will be Amy Landecker, who portrays Sarah, daughter of transitioning Maura Pfefferman (Jeffrey Tambor). *Curve* caught up with Landecker on the eve of the summit.

Out & Equal's Momentum gala is sure to be an evening of great importance. How does it feel to be representing *Transparent*, which will be receiving an honor for its groundbreaking portrayal of the transgender community?

First, let me say that the work Out & Equal is doing for the LGBT community is exceptional and incredibly necessary and it is incredibly rewarding to be honored by them. One of the coolest parts of my job is being able to meet people whose lives have been inspired and transformed by our show. The character of Maura is one of the only depictions on television of a person transitioning later in life. And a person who is not in jail, or on drugs, but is a parent and a friend and a working member of society – as are her trans friends' supporters in the show. It is a family dramedy with a transgender parent as its matriarch. It is truly groundbreaking and we are all thrilled that organizations like Out & Equal are recognizing and honoring that.

How important is it that the media represent the transgender – and LGBT – community in a positive way? Do you believe *Transparent* represents the community in a way that meets the utmost standards?

If those standards are authenticity and compassion and honesty and humor and truth, then the answer is a rousing yes! As a culture, we are moved to change through storytelling. We see positive images first on TV and then we come to acceptance. That just seems to be the way.

It is incredibly important to show a trans character, as well as a gay character, in a positive light because for some people it will be their entry into the community and acceptance.

And for some, it will be the entry to themselves. The ability to see themselves on screen in a positive way and say, "That's me. It is okay to be me."

How did it feel to first take on this role when it was presented to you? Did you think it would have this big of an impact on the TV circuit?

I was so excited. Sarah is one of the most complicated and interesting and fully realized characters I have ever been given to play. And Jill Soloway is a genius. Add Jeffrey and the rest of the cast and I can't say I'm completely surprised. Perhaps by how quickly it all took place, but I knew it was exceptional when we were doing it.



When you hear stories of LGBT people being fired from their jobs because of their sexual orientation in parts of the country, what comes to your mind? How do you think *Transparent* can help bring barriers down in the work environment?

What comes to my mind? Anger. Anger at ignorance and injustice. I think the show can play a huge role in giving people an understanding of the life of a transitioning adult. Understanding is the way to acceptance. I have already heard from so many of my transgendered friends how it has changed their perception and understanding of the trans community.

Has your own personal view of the LGBT community changed at all from the beginning of your career until this point in your life?

My day job before my career took off was working in development for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, so I have been an LGBT community ally since I got out of college. What I love most about being on *Transparent* is I get to combine my love of acting with my love of community activism. It's the best. And being at Out & Equal's Momentum Gala is the kind of job benefit I have now that makes it so rewarding.

Are there any challenges you face playing this role on such a groundbreaking series? How would you describe your connection to your character and with the other actors in creating this series?

I can't really say it's been challenging. I look forward to going to work every day and this cast is the most amazing group of people I have ever worked with. We really are a family. Truly. If it's challenging it's in the best way possible. The work is deep and spiritual at times, and the responsibility is heavy to represent well a group of people who seldom have a voice.

Do you think with the Golden Globe win, *Transparent* may pave the way for more LGBT lead roles in mainstream TV and cinema?

I know it already has. This year's pilot season was filled with breakdowns for LGBT roles as well as roles specifically asking for trans actors, which is so exciting. *Transparent* has the largest group of trans actors in its cast in the history of television and it also has trans employees in almost every department. So I hope in addition to lead roles, we pave the way for employment in all areas of production.

More info: www.outandequal.org

<http://www.curvemag.com/News/Out-Equal-To-Honor-Transparent-At-Momentum-Gala-388/>