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PRC Honors the Legacy of Sylvester, “Queen of Disco,” at “Mighty Real” Gala, Oct. 6 in San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO (Sept. 5, 2017) – In the mood for a night of disco dancing for a good cause? [Positive Resource Center](#) (PRC), a San Francisco-based nonprofit whose mission is to assist people living with HIV/AIDS, mental health or substance use issues, celebrates 30 years of service with its annual fundraising gala, [Mighty Real](#), on Friday, Oct. 6 at the Four Seasons Hotel San Francisco.

Hosted by LGBTQ rights pioneer, Ken Jones, and Michelle Meow, of *The Michelle Meow Show*, this year’s gala honors singer-songwriter, Sylvester. His popular “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)” single reached *Billboard*’s Top 40 in 1979, earning him the coveted “Queen of Disco” title by fans worldwide. An activist who campaigned against the spread of HIV/AIDS, Sylvester died in 1998 from complications related to the disease. In his will, Sylvester directed royalties from all future sales of his music to two San Francisco-based HIV/AIDS organizations: AIDS Emergency Fund (which merged with PRC in 2016) and Project Open Hand.

The evening’s gala festivities include a cocktail reception, three-course dinner, live entertainment, silent/live auctions and an after party featuring DJ Lamont. During the event, PRC is honoring actor and philanthropist Sheryl Lee Ralph with the inaugural Sylvester Community Pillar Award. Ralph landed her breakthrough role as Deena Jones in the Broadway musical, *Dreamgirls*, for which she received a Tony nomination for “Best Actress in a Musical.” In addition, she is the founding director of the nonprofit Divinely Inspired Victoriously Aware (DIVA) Foundation, which seeks to utilize the arts as a vehicle to raise HIV/AIDS awareness. Ralph is also co-producer of the Broadway musical, *Mighty Real: A Fabulous Sylvester Musical*.



Sheryl Lee Ralph (left) and Sylvester (right)



Ken Jones (left) and Michelle Meow (right)
host PRC’s Mighty Real gala, Oct. 6 in San Francisco

“I’m humbled and so excited to be the first recipient of PRC’s Sylvester Community Pillar Award. In the 80’s, nobody wanted to talk about AIDS and many of my friends died under stigma, shame and silence. Sylvester always spoke out and used his voice to encourage others to love themselves,” said Ralph. “I lost my friend Sylvester far too soon to AIDS. However, he remains in our memory, and is still very much alive because his music lives.”

PRC is also recognizing the contributions of Tom Nolan and Gilead Sciences by honoring them with the Vanguard Leadership Award and the Keystone Service Award, respectively.

“The contributions made by people like Sheryl, Tom and Gilead Sciences are paramount to what we do, and we’re indebted to each of them for continuing to stand up for those who can’t always fight for themselves,” said Brett Andrews, PRC’s chief executive officer. “As PRC celebrates three decades of service, we look forward to continuing our efforts to provide invaluable support to people managing issues related to mental health, substance use and HIV/AIDS.”

Mighty Real Honorees

Sheryl Lee Ralph – Sylvester Community Pillar Award

- Sheryl Lee Ralph is best known for her work on stage and screen (*Moesha*, *Ray Donovan*, *WICKED*), and particularly for her Tony-nominated performance in the original production of *Dreamgirls*. PRC honors her efforts to create The DIVA Foundation and as a co-producer of *Mighty Real: A Fabulous Sylvester Musical*.

Tom Nolan – Vanguard Leadership Award

- A human rights advocate for decades, Tom Nolan served as the executive director for San Francisco-based [Project Open Hand](#), which provides meals to the critically ill, for 17 years. He also served as chairman of the board for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMUNI) and served on the board of supervisors in nearby San Mateo County. Currently, he is working with San Francisco’s Department of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) on issues facing LGBT seniors and people with disabilities.

Gilead Sciences – Keystone Service Award

- [Gilead Sciences](#), based in the San Francisco Bay Area, is a biopharmaceutical company that discovers, develops and commercializes medicines to treat conditions including HIV/AIDS and liver disease. Its scientific focus has resulted in 23 marketed products that benefit millions of people. Gilead access program ensures that these medications are available to those who could otherwise not afford them.

About Sylvester

Sylvester (Sylvester James, Jr.) was a singer-songwriter most known for a string of 70’s and 80’s disco singles, including “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real).” This song helped establish his career as an international disco and dance music performer, earning him the “Queen of Disco” title. An activist who campaigned against the spread of HIV/AIDS, Sylvester died in 1998 from complications related to the disease. In his will, Sylvester directed royalties from all future sales of his music to two San Francisco-based HIV/AIDS organizations: AIDS Emergency Fund (which merged with PRC in 2016) and Project Open Hand.

For more information about PRC, to purchase tickets to *Mighty Real* or to make a donation, please visit: <http://www.positiveresource.org>.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Positive Resource Center's (PRC) "Mighty Real" Gala

WHAT:

Positive Resource Center (PRC) celebrates 30 years of service with its annual gala, *Mighty Real*. Hosted by LGBTQ rights pioneer, Ken Jones, and Michelle Meow, of *The Michelle Meow Show*, this year's event honors singer-songwriter, Sylvester. PRC is honoring actor and philanthropist, Sheryl Lee Ralph, with the inaugural Sylvester Community Pillar Award. Ralph landed her breakthrough role as Deena Jones in the Broadway musical, *Dreamgirls*, for which she received a Tony nomination for "Best Actress in a Musical."

WHERE:

Four Seasons Hotel San Francisco / Veranda Ballroom
757 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94103

WHEN / TIMELINE:

Friday, Oct. 6, 2017
6:00 p.m. – Cocktails, silent auction
7:30 p.m. – Dinner, awards & live auction
9:30 p.m. – After party with DJ Lamont

WHO:

Attendees include:

- Sheryl Lee Ralph, Sylvester Community Pillar Awardee
- Tom Nolan, Vanguard Leadership Awardee
- Gilead Sciences, Keystone Service Awardee
- Ken Jones and Michelle Meow, Event Hosts

ADMISSION:

Open to the public; ticket prices start at \$250 per person and are available via [Eventbrite](#).

For more information, please visit PRC online at www.positiveresource.org/mightyreal or call Sean Greene (415) 777-0333 x230.

MEDIA PLEASE NOTE:

Editors interested in attending PRC's Mighty Real Gala, or to request an interview with Sheryl Lee Ralph, Tom Nolan or CEO Brett Andrews, please contact Gus Nodal at (415) 561-0888 or via email at gus@landispr.com.

ABOUT POSITIVE RESOURCE CENTER (PRC)

Positive Resource Center (PRC), a San Francisco-based nonprofit, provides comprehensive benefits counseling, health and employment services to those affected by HIV/AIDS, substance use and/or mental health issues. The organization helps people realize their potential by offering integrated legal, social and health-related services, all of which address the broad range of social risk factors that impact wellness and limit potential.

In 2016, PRC merged with two local nonprofits: Baker Places, Inc. which provides an array of residential treatment services to people managing mental health and substance use issues, and AIDS Emergency Fund, an emergency financial assistance provider for low-income residents affected by HIV/AIDS. With a combined 115-year history of service, PRC is deeply rooted in San Francisco, fighting for social and economic justice for the City's low-income and disabled populations. For more information, please visit www.positiveresource.org.

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