



IN THE LIFE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bomb Scare at Chicago Public Television Station Spotlights Homophobia, but the Outpouring of Public Support Signals Acceptance

Oscar Wilde once said, “Nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.” But, perhaps, what WTTW’s viewers took from yesterday’s bomb threat made against their public television station for airing a gay documentary on Chicago is this: public television is a precious resource in illuminating issues around social justice, and that it’s one to be protected.

Despite the bomb scare, received earlier in the evening in connection to its historic showing of *Out & Proud in Chicago*, a presentation of the history of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in Chicago, WTTW experienced a surge in positive viewer feedback and pledges during the program’s airing. Says the program’s co-executive-producer and Vice President Fundraising Programming, WTTW in Chicago Jerry Liwanag: “The support we’ve received from the entire Chicago community, even during the early stages of this project, has been awe-inspiring. As someone who can remember an era when talking about being gay was taboo, the public’s response to our airing *Out & Proud* [in the wake of the bomb scare] has been astounding, and – personally – very touching.”

Michelle Kristel, Executive Director of In The Life Media, Inc. [producer of IN THE LIFE, the LGBT documentary series regularly aired on WTTW] offered her support to WTTW, saying, “While this incident sadly illustrates the persistence of hatred against LGBT people, the public’s response is not only heartening, but a welcomed reminder of the support for independent television that represents the full diversity of American life.”

This month’s Pride episode of IN THE LIFE, *Leading the Way*, is due to air on WTTW, June 13TH, at 10:30PM and June 15TH at 4AM. The episode will feature a collection of stories celebrating people who display the remarkable courage and diversity found with the ranks of the LGBT community, such as, newly appointed member of Nepal Parliament, Sunil Plant; internationally acclaimed director of opera and theater,

Francesca Zambello; Cheyenne Jackson, star of Best Musical Tony Award nominated Broadway show, *Xanadu*; and *A Conversation With...* Judy Shepard, reflecting on the tenth anniversary of the brutal murder of her gay son, Matthew. Kristel continued, "IN THE LIFE is proud to be a part of WTTW's rich heritage of cultural and educational programming."

The Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Chairman and Commissioner Dana V. Starks condemned the threat, calling it "shameful and disgusting," reinforcing the critical – if courageous – role public television assumes in broadening social discourse around LGBT issues by further commenting, "This incident emphasizes the importance of providing education on the harmfulness of stereotypes which lead to discrimination – and even hate."

In addition to airing on American Public Television stations, IN THE LIFE is available for video streaming and as a free downloadable podcast. To find local airtimes, or to view or download it, viewers can visit our Website by going to: www.inthelifetv.org.

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IN THE LIFE is the pioneering documentary series telling powerful stories about the people and issues shaping the gay experience, nationally and abroad. IN THE LIFE has a 15-year heritage of producing in-depth segments on a myriad of issues – politics, public policy, health, education, religion and spirituality. IN THE LIFE's mission is to create programming fostering better understanding and acceptance of the LGBT communities.

IN THE LIFE is a three-time Emmy Award nominee and the winner of numerous awards, including a Lambda Legal Liberty Award, the prestigious Barbara Gittings Award "for contributions to LGBT media" from GLAAD, and the Seigenthaler Award from the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association for "excellence in network television." IN THE LIFE is produced by In The Life Media, Inc., the national not-for-profit organization dedicated to provocative documentary storytelling about the gay experience.