



AIDS RESOURCE CENTER OF WISCONSIN

Excellence in HIV Health Care



For immediate release

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Taye Diggs Named AIDS Walk Wisconsin Honorary Chair

MILWAUKEE... Award-winning Broadway, television and film star Taye Diggs will be the Honorary Chair of the 27th annual AIDS Walk Wisconsin & 5K Run. The event will take place on Saturday, October 1st at the Summerfest Grounds in Milwaukee.

“Twenty years ago I was proud to be an original member of the cast of *RENT* on Broadway. Today, I am continuing my support of the fight against AIDS as the Honorary Chair of the 27th annual AIDS Walk Wisconsin & 5K Run,” said Diggs. “I’m proud of what this event will do for people with HIV and AIDS, I’m proud that this event will continue funding to stop the spread of HIV in the first place and I am honored by the invitation to help Wisconsin keep its place in our country as a leader in responding to this epidemic.”

Diggs is well known for the role of Benny Coffin III in Jonathan Larson’s Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winning musical *RENT*. His film career includes *How Stella Got her Groove Back*, *Brown Sugar*, *Chicago* and *The Best Man* series. His television career includes roles on the *Guiding Light*, *Ally McBeal*, *Kevin Hill*, *Will and Grace* and *Private Practice*. He has received awards from the Screen Actors Guild, the Broadcast Film Critics Association and the NAACP Image Awards. He is currently voicing a role for the animated movie, *My Little Pony*, due out next year.

“So many people have come to know the fight against AIDS through the musical *RENT*. In the 20th year of its debut on Broadway we are excited and proud to be working with Taye Diggs as our Honorary Chair,” said AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) President and Chief Executive Officer Michael Gifford. ARCW produces AIDS Walk Wisconsin.

Over the past 26 years, more than 125,000 registrants have participated in AIDS Walk Wisconsin raising more than \$12.3 million. One hundred percent of the pledges raised from AIDS Walk Wisconsin have stayed in Wisconsin to benefit people living with HIV in the state.

“The demands of the AIDS epidemic are greater than ever. A record number of people with HIV – many of whom are living in deep poverty - will turn to ARCW this year for health care and supportive services

that will keep them alive,” said Gifford. “Our walkers are the difference between being penniless with nowhere to turn for care and living healthy with HIV.”

This spring, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, published new estimates on the extent of the AIDS epidemic in America. According to these estimates, 1.2 million Americans have been diagnosed from every walk of life. HIV continues to disproportionately affect the gay community with gay men having a 1 in 6 chance of contracting HIV in their lifetime and for gay men of color the chance is 1 in 2.

“People need to understand that this epidemic is still claiming lives and that we still need to mount a fight against it. As Honorary Chair, I am positively challenged by this,” said Diggs.

The AIDS Walk Wisconsin & 5K Run website is live and ready for registration and is optimized for smart phone use. The event is free. Registrants who raise pledges will win exciting prizes.

“I expect to see everyone down at the Summerfest grounds on Saturday, October 1st,” Diggs said. “Go to www.AIDSWalkWis.org today. Register, raise pledges and if you raise \$1,000 or more in pledges, I get to have my photo taken with you at the Walk. Let’s make that a goal.”

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Past Honorary Chairs of AIDS Walk Wisconsin

‘NSYNC Star **Lance Bass** and Husband **Michael Turchin**, 2015
TV Fashion Guru **Tim Gunn**, 2014
Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism **Stephanie Klett**, 2013
Milwaukee Brewer and National League MVP **Ryan Braun**, 2012
Green Bay Packer Linebacker and World Champion **Clay Matthews**, 2011
Wisconsin Indie Rock Sensation **Bon Iver**, 2009
Tony Award winning actor **BD Wong**, 2006
Milwaukee Mayor **Tom Barrett & Kris Barrett**, 2005
Wisconsin Governor **Jim Doyle & First Lady Jessica Doyle**, 2003
Actor **Bill Brochtrup**, 2002
R&B singer/songwriter **Eric Benet**, 2001
Six-Time Olympic Champion **Jackie Joyner-Kersey**, 2000
Actor, film director and political activist **Danny Glover**, 1999
Advocate **Chastity Bono**, 1998
Four-Time Olympic Champion **Greg Louganis**, 1997
Award winning actress, comedian, singer/songwriter **Bette Midler**, 1996
Vice President **Al Gore & Tipper Gore**, 1995
Milwaukee Brewer Outfielder **Darryl Hamilton**, 1994
Earvin “**Magic**” **Johnson** and Milwaukee Bucks Coach **Mike Dunleavy**, 1993
Milwaukee Brewer & Baseball Hall of Famer **Paul and Linda Molitor**, 1992
Bud and Sue Selig of the Milwaukee Brewers, 1991
Milwaukee Mayor **John O. Norquist** and **Susan Mudd**, 1990

About the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin

The AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin is home to the ARCW Medical Center – Wisconsin’s largest and fastest growing HIV health care system. Through its integrated medical, dental and mental health clinics along with its pharmacy and dedicated social services that include food pantries, a legal program, housing support and social work case management, 3,440 HIV patients in Wisconsin gain the health care and social services they need for long-term survival with HIV disease from ARCW. ARCW is also a leading provider of HIV prevention programs that help make sure people at highest risk for contracting HIV have access to the information and materials they need to remain HIV-negative.