

# Winter Party Miami Festival Draws Record Attendance

The 2008 Winter Party Festival was an extraordinary success with record attendance at its signature event, the 15th Annual Beach Party. Held from Feb. 23 to March 3, this year's festival drew more than 10,000 total attendees across more than two dozen events.

Produced by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, it featured an expanded lineup of cultural events and programming for specific segments of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community as well as world-class dance events at some of the most popular nightclubs in South Beach and Miami.

The festival culminated in the famous Winter Party Beach Party, which attracted approximately 6,000 guests. The increase in attendance was fueled by significantly more attendees from Western Europe and the United Kingdom.

In May, when final reconciliations are completed, the Task Force will donate two-thirds of the festival's proceeds to the Dade Community Foundation to support LGBT organizations in Miami-Dade, with the remaining one-third going to support the Task Force's actions nationwide.

"We're proud to be continuing to grow the Winter Party Festival into a world-class event that draws guests from around the globe and remains 100 percent of, by and for the LGBT

community," said Executive Director Matt Foreman. "The broad program of events demonstrates our commitment to inclusion and diversity as well as raising awareness of the valuable work of the Task Force in communities across America."

This year's lineup included new events for women, a dinner dance for the transgender community, an art exhibit, a gathering for youth, another for people of faith and a

family picnic. Record-breaking highlights include more than 450 guests at the Showtime Departure Lounge event, 2,700 attendees at the Doubletree Surfcomber pool party, 2,000 spectators at Winter Party Runway, a fashion show sponsored by aussieBum, and more than 60 journalists from countries as far afield as Turkey, France, Ireland, Germany, Brazil and the U.K.

To support the organization's pro-LGBT actions, Task Force field organizers identified nearly 3,000 people interested in helping defeat the anti-marriage constitutional amendment that will be on November's Florida ballot, and staff from the Movement Building department pushed a healthy safer-sex message.



Photo: Dennis Dean

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