

White House invites gays to egg roll

By **GILLIAN GAYNAIR**
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WASHINGTON — The White House is allocating tickets for the upcoming Easter Egg Roll to gay and lesbian families as part of the Obama administration's outreach to diverse communities.

Families say the gesture shows that the new Democratic administration values them as equal to other families. And for many, being included in the annual tradition — dating to 1878 — renews hope that they will have

more support in their quest for equal rights in matters such as marriage and adoption than under the previous administration.

White House officials said that tickets for Monday's Easter Egg Roll event were distributed to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender organizations but did not specify how many or to which ones. Representatives from Family Equality Council, Human Rights Campaign, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and other groups confirmed they were invited and encour-

aged to have their members participate.

"The Obama administration actually reached out to us as an organization and said we want gay families there, and they are an important part of the American family fabric," said Jennifer Chrisler, executive director of the Boston-based Family Equality Council, which is helping spearhead the effort to organize families to attend.

Chrisler said Tuesday she expects more than 100 gay- and lesbian-headed families to take part in the egg roll.

