**THE 2018 INTERNATIONAL RAINBOW MEMORIAL RUN**

**In Honor of Gilbert Baker, Keith Haring, Rikki Streicher**

**and Dr. Tom Waddell**

Presented by the Federation of Gay Games and the American Run for the End of AIDS

in association with Paris 2018 Gay Games 10, the NAMES Project Foundation,

the Keith Haring Foundation, International Front Runners and local Teams and LGBTQ Pride and AIDS Organizations around the globe

*The International Rainbow Memorial Run* is a series of events to bring the Rainbow Flag around the world in 2018 as a symbolic “torch” from San Francisco, the “Athens” of the Gay Games, to *Gay Games 10* in Paris. These events include memorial runs with the Rainbow Flag; displays of Memorial Quilts historically linked to the Gay Games; receptions and rallies focused on remembrance, AIDS and breast cancer prevention; and promotion of *Gay Games 10* in Paris from 4 to 12 August 2018.

The Federation of Gay Games (FGG) and the American Run for the End of AIDS (AREA) have produced seven similar events in association with the NAMES Project Foundation, the Keith Haring Foundation, International Front Runners, past Gay Games Host Organizations, Teams and other international and local organizations to the last seven Gay Games ***– the Rainbow Run for the End of AIDS*** in 1990***, the Rainbow Roll for the End of AIDS*** in 1994, ***the International Rainbow Memorial Run*** in 1998, ***the International Rainbow Memorial Run*** in 2002, ***the International Rainbow Memorial Run*** in 2006, ***the International Rainbow Memorial Run*** in 2010 and ***the International Rainbow Memorial Run*** in 2014. On Pride Day 1987, during his 20-month, 9,000 mile run around the United States called ***the American Run for the End of AIDS***, Brent Nicholson Earle, AREA’s Founder and President, received a special Rainbow Flag from the South Florida LGBTQ community. In 1990, Earle ran this Rainbow Flag a thousand miles from San Francisco to Vancouver, B.C. and led the athletes and cultural participants into the stadium for the Opening Ceremonies of Gay Games III. In 1994, he led a team of six in-line skaters 4,300 miles from San Francisco to New York carrying this same Rainbow Flag to Gay Games IV and Stonewall 25. Leading up to Gay Games V in Amsterdam in 1998, Gay Games VI in Sydney, Gay Games VII in Chicago, Gay Games VIII in Cologne and Gay Games 9 in Cleveland and Akron, the Rainbow Flag was symbolically carried from San Francisco to the Gay Games by runners from around the world. These pre-Gay Games events were originally in memory of artist Keith Haring and Gay Games Founder, Dr. Tom Waddell. In 1998 lesbian activist Rikki Streicher was added as an honoree and in 2018 Gilbert Baker, the Creator of the Rainbow Flag who died in 2017, will also be honored. In keeping with this theme of remembrance, reading names and leaving memorials on Signature Quilt Squares have been integral components of these events.

The name and concept of ***the International Rainbow Memorial Run*** will be maintained for the series of community events to bring the Rainbow Flag to ***Paris 2018 Gay Games 10***, as well as for future Gay Games. Although not as athletically ambitious as the first two ultra-marathons with the Rainbow Flag, ***the International Rainbow Memorial Run*** is still able to deliver an effective message about the history of the Gay Games, the struggle for LGBTQ civil and human rights, and the need for AIDS and breast cancer awareness and prevention***. The International Rainbow Memorial Run*** will also pay tribute to Baker, Haring, Streicher and Waddell, as well as many others who have contributed to the Gay Games movement and LGBTQ culture. At each leg of the ***Run*** a new Signature Quilt donated by the NAMES Project Foundation will be unfolded to provide opportunities for leaving memorials to loved ones and the ***Run*** will conclude in Paris on 4 August 2018 to coincide with both the Opening of ***Gay Games 10*** and the Opening of an International AIDS Memorial Quilt Display running throughout the week of the Games. The intention of this series of international events leading up to ***Paris 2018 Gay Games 10*** is not only to promote the Gay Games but to help unify the global LGBTQ community, increase its visibility and strength, raise awareness about important health issues affecting the community and to remember its pioneers.

***The International Rainbow Memorial Run*** is a collaborative effort involving many groups around the world. Participation in the planning and execution of this series of events is welcomed. For more information, contact the Federation of Gay Games (FGG) at info@gaygames.org, the American Run for the End of AIDS (AREA) at area.brent@gmail.com or International Front Runners at wmorgan2035@gmail.com.