



White House welcomes Chicago-area gay family for 134th Egg Roll

By Anthony Morgano

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CHICAGO, IL -- The White House is welcoming more than 35,000 people to its 134th Egg Roll this Monday April 9 and among them is a family from suburban Chicago: four-year-old Siena Rose Garcia-Rizzo and her dads, Jaime Garcia and Daryl Rizzo.

The couple was contacted by [Equality Illinois](#), the state's oldest and largest LGBT advocacy organization, who knew the gay couple and their daughter from their participation in Chicago's inaugural civil union ceremony held in Millennium Park last June. "Papa" Jaime and "Daddy" Daryl have been together for 12 years, are recent transplants from Chicago and now live with Siena, her grandmother and three dogs in LaGrange, a suburb west of the city.

"Our family is thrilled to participate in the White House Easter Egg Roll event," Rizzo said in a press release from [Equality Illinois](#). "To be a part of a celebration that has been a presidential tradition for over 100 years is an honor. Just as important is the opportunity to represent a new tradition for the American family, a loving same-sex household with an adored adopted child. Through the eyes of our four-year-old daughter, there will be no difference between her family and the many families she will encounter on the White House lawn."

Gay couples and their children have been in attendance for several years. More than 100 showed up in 2006 during President George W. Bush's term to make a point about the visibility of gay families, but were accused by many of crashing the event. President Barak Obama and First Lady Michelle, however, made it a point to formally invite same-sex couples and their children to their first Egg Roll in 2009.

"The contrast between the previous administration and the Obama administration is stark," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of [Equality Illinois](#). "While families with gay and lesbian parents had to invite themselves into the event during the Bush years and often felt shunted off to the sidelines, the White House under President Obama has worked to ensure full involvement of families with gay and lesbian parents."

One of Washington's oldest traditions, the White House Easter Egg Roll was started in the latter half of the 19th century when children gathered on the Capitol grounds on Easter Monday to participate in egg rolling. Egg rolling is a tradition that involves pushing a hardboiled egg across the grass using a long-handled spoon, a sort of predecessor to the modern egg race game popular at relay races and summer camps. Congress, angered at the damage the game caused to the grass, passed a law in the 1870's that forbid the practice, however, President Rutherford B. Hayes revived the tradition in 1878, moving the festivities to the White House Lawn.

Today, the White House welcomes tens of thousands of families to take participate in a daylong event that includes the traditional egg roll as well as music, food, games and storytelling. Julianne Moore and Forest Whitaker are among the celebrities who will be reading stories for the kids and professional athletes like Michelle Kwan are appearing to help promote healthy and active living as part of this year's theme "Let's Go, Let's Play, Let's Move!"

Update 8:30 a.m. (CT), April 9: Jaime, Daryl and Siena Rose are on their way to pick up tickets and attend the White House Egg Roll this morning.

Update 10:45 a.m. (CT), April 9: Family waiting in line to get into the Easter Egg Roll at the White House.

Related: [Gay couple will try to question Obama on rights at Easter Egg Roll](#)