

Steven Canals, Harold Philips, Dr. Mitchell Katz, and Valerie Jimenez - Reyes to Be Honored at 2024 Cielo Gala

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Screenwriter and Producer Steven Canals, Former White House Director of National AIDS Policy

Harold Philips, NYC Health + Hospitals President

and CEO Dr. Mitchell Katz, and Community Activist

Valerie Jimenez - Reyes to Be Honored by Latino

Commission on AIDS at 2024 Cielo Gala

The night, hosted by actor and producer Dominic Colón, will feature a tribute to beloved New York City advocate and trans icon, Cecilia Gentili and a presentation by model, actor, and musician Laith Ashley

□The Latino Commission on AIDS will host its annual Cielo Gala on Friday, May 31, 2024, at Cipriani Wall Street in New York City, kicking off Pride month and celebrating its 29th year. The event will recognize several individuals who

continue the fight against HIV and AIDS and for access to health care for marginalized and under-resourced communities. Those being honored are Dr. Mitchell Katz, president and CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals; former White House Director of National AIDS Policy Harold Philips; screenwriter and producer Steven Canals; and community activist, Valerie Jimenez-Reyes. This year's gala will be held in memory of beloved trans advocate and pillar in the New York LGBTQ+ community, Ms. Cecilia Gentili.

"We are humbled and absolutely thrilled to be joined by amazing leaders and advocates in the fight against HIV and AIDS as we continue our mission for creating safe spaces where all Latinx people can access proper healthcare," said Guillermo Chacon, president of the Latino Commission on AIDS. "Latinos remain disproportionately affected by HIV, both in terms of new HIV diagnosis and the total number of HIV cases. We must resist the urge of complacency and continue education and prevention efforts in all communities until we eradicate the virus



completely!"

The Cielo Gala is an important platform to recognize the work of those who support the Commission's goals of ending HIV and AIDS and improving overall health outcomes and wellness for the Hispanic/Latinx community. Dr. Katz is the president and CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals, the largest public healthcare system in the United States. Under his leadership, NYC Health + Hospitals has become a beacon of hope for those who have historically faced barriers to quality healthcare. This year's Esperanza Award celebrates Dr. Katz's outstanding dedication to public health, particularly his unwavering commitment to serving underserved communities in New York City.

During his tenure as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy from June 2021 to January 2024, Mr. Phillips played a pivotal role in shaping the Biden Administration's domestic HIV/AIDS priorities. His leadership was instrumental in monitoring and implementing the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, ensuring that America's response to the epidemic was comprehensive, accelerated, and inclusive of the experiences of those at risk of and living with HIV. Phillips' invaluable contributions have left a lasting impact on HIV/AIDS advocacy and policy. The Compañero Award serves as a testament to Mr. Phillips' unwavering commitment, leadership and dedication to ending the HIV epidemic.

In a cultural landscape often marked by silence and stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS, Steven Canals emerged as a powerful voice for those affected by the epidemic. Drawing inspiration from his own experiences and the stories of those within the LGBTQ+ community, Canals has dedicated himself to amplifying narratives that have long been marginalized. Beyond the screen, Canals has consistently leveraged his influence to effect real change. Canals is being honored with the ILKA Award, named after the late actress and advocate Ilka Tanya Payán, for his tireless efforts in advocating for people living with HIV/AIDS, dismantling stigma, and expanding access to resources. The award will be presented by POSE actor, model, singer, and activist Laith Ashley.

The Denis Deleon Voz the Compromiso Award honors the selflessness and commitment of persons living with HIV and AIDS who dedicate themselves to enlighten the public about the disease and support others who are affected by it. This year, the Latino Commission on AIDS is honoring Valerie Jimenez-Reyes due to her relentless organizing efforts with HousingWorks and activism in the HIV and AIDS space. After testing positive for HIV in 1989, Jimenez – Reyes has been a devoted advocate for people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as those suffering from homelessness, substance use, and mental health disorders in New York City.

The 2024 Cielo Gala will be hosted by Dominic Colón, actor and producer. The night will also feature a fashion show by Brazilian designer and project runway alum, Layana Aguilar. Three-time Grammy-winning Spanish Harlem Orchestra along with DJ Missy B will provide live entertainment during the event.

To buy tickets and for more information, please visit www.cielolatino.org.

The Latino Commission on AIDS (Commission) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1990 dedicated to meet the health challenges and address the impact of HIV and AIDS, viral Hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), addressing stigma in the Hispanic/Latinx community. The Commission is the leading organization coordinating National Hispanic Hepatitis Awareness Day (May 15), National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (October 15), Latinos in the South, the Latino Religious Leadership Program and other prevention, research, capacity building, and advocacy programs across the United States and its territories. The Commission is also the founder of the Hispanic Health Network, dedicated to addressing health disparities.

For more information about the Latino Commission on AIDS please visit latinoaids.org

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