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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: LADY GAGA'S BORN THIS WAY FOUNDATION PARTNERS WITH THE MONTROSE CENTER TO HIGHLIGHT HATCH YOUTH**

**(HOUSTON, TX, FEB 3, 2017)** – On February 4, 2017, as the city of Houston is preparing to host Super Bowl LI, the Montrose Center will be teaming up with the Born This Way Foundation in support of their #KickOffForKindness campaign. This social media partnership will highlight our HATCH Youth programming.

The adolescent and teen years are universally awkward, so imagine coping with the normal ups and downs of teen life, and adding to the mix the challenges of being a youth who questions their sexual orientation. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning young people in the United States and around the world have expressed a heightened sense of fear, harassment and neglect due to their sexual orientation. Perhaps most painful of all, however, is when gay youth are rejected by their own families, which accounts for the overwhelming amount of youth homelessness.

LGBTQ youth have the right to safe and accepting environments, including homes, schools, and health care settings, and the right to live with dignity and without fear from stigma, discrimination and violence. Hatch Youth strives to make this possible.

Founded in 1987, Hatch Youth Services is the oldest and largest LGBTQ youth program in Texas. The program is dedicated to empowering lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and allied (LGBTQIA) youth, ages 13-20, to become positive contributors to society by providing a safe social environment, offering role models and peer support, and sponsoring educational and community outreach opportunities. Hatch leads the city-wide NEST Coalition to end youth homelessness by 2020. Last year our outreach workers found 242 LGBTQ homeless youth on the streets and this year we start rapid rehousing of homeless youth. Most recently the center has added special programs to include trans youth and youth of color. In last year alone, an astounding 867 youth were involved in Hatch Youth programming.

Born This Way Foundation was launched in 2012 by Lady Gaga and her mother, Cynthia Germanotta. The foundation has dedicated the past two years to researching, learning and developing programs to connect young people in safe ways and empower them with the skills and opportunities that will inspire them to create a kinder and braver world. They achieve this by shining a light on real people, quality research, and authentic partnerships. We couldn't dream up a better partnership, as we share the same commitment to support our youth, specifically within the services of our Hatch Youth programming.

In a world that is typically unkind to LGBTQ people, Hatch provides space and guidance to cultivate a generation of LGBTQ youth leaders who will make a braver and kinder world. Join us and the Born This Way Foundation in the #KickOffForKindness campaign this Super Bowl season in support of our youth



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and do not forget to tune in to watch Lady Gaga rock the halftime show. Follow the movement @BTWFoundation, @HATCHYouth and @Montrose\_Center.

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#### **THE MONTROSE CENTER**

Established in 1978 as a safe and affirming place for lesbian and gay Houstonians to receive counseling, the Montrose Center has emerged as one of the nation's leading full-service LGBT centers. Although counseling remains at the heart of what we do, services have expanded to meet the changing needs of our diverse community. These services include substance abuse treatment, support and advocacy for LGBT survivors of violent crimes, care and assistance for people with HIV/AIDS, free community wellness programs and activities, and programs for our community's most vulnerable and isolated—youth and seniors. We sit at the center of the LGBT community and serve as a gathering place for LGBT organizations and groups. The Montrose Center is a United Way Agency.