

ascena retail group Achieves a 100% Rating on the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Corporate Equality Index (CEI) And Earns LGBTQ "Best Places to Work" Designation
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Company has long history of support for the LGBTQ community -- having hosted special shopping events for the transgender community as early as 1965

MAHWAH, N.J., Dec. 11, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- ascena retail group, inc. announced that it received the top score of 100% on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2018 Corporate Equality Index. The CEI is the national benchmarking tool on corporate policies and practices related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) workplace equality.

The leading women's specialty retailer, participating for the first time, is among a record-breaking 609 employers that achieved the top score this year, along with the distinction of "Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality."

The CEI rating criteria includes non-discrimination policies, equitable benefits for LGBTQ workers and their families, internal education and accountability metrics to promote LGBTQ inclusion competency, and public commitment to LGBTQ equality.

ascena's long-standing commitment to diversity and inclusion is felt at all levels of the organization. David Jaffe, Chairman and CEO of ascena, reflects on the early inclusion that his mother, Roslyn Jaffe, founder of dressbarn, exhibited when she hosted after-hours shopping events for the transgender community.

"My mother, or 'Mrs. J' as our associates affectionately refer to her, was a pioneer on many levels. She knew back in the 1960s that diversity and inclusion were good for business," said Jaffe. "I'm proud that ascena is being recognized by HRC for a culture that was established decades ago and is nurtured today. The rich diversity of our 64,000 associates makes us stronger together as we deliver best-in-class fashion and experience to all women and girls."

Jaffe acknowledged, "As yesterday marked the anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it makes this recognition that much more significant."

Jaffe's leadership team owns the culture and ascena's results in the marketplace and workplace. "Earning the HRC distinction of being a 'Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality' reflects the commitment we've made as a company and to diversity and inclusion as a whole," said Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer John Pershing, who also serves as executive sponsor of ascenaPRIDE, the Company's associate resource group for LGBTQ associates and their allies.

The focus of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) aligns with ascena's commitment to corporate social responsibility and diversity and inclusion. Earlier this year, ascena was among 104 top businesses that sponsored the HRC's Business Coalition for the Equality Act, landmark federal legislation that affirms the same non-discrimination protections to LGBTQ people as other protected groups under federal law.

For more information about the 2018 Corporate Equality Index, visit www.hrc.org/cei.

About ascena retail group, inc. ascena retail group, inc. (NASDAQ: ASNA) is a leading national specialty retailer offering apparel, shoes, and accessories for women under the Premium Fashion segment (Ann Taylor, LOFT, and Lou & Grey), Value Fashion segment (maurices and dressbarn), Plus Fashion segment (Lane Bryant and Catherines), and for tween girls under the Kids Fashion segment (Justice). ascena retail group, inc. operates ecommerce websites and approximately 4,800 stores throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

For more information about ascena retail group, inc. visit: ascenaretail.com, AnnTaylor.com, LOFT.com, louandgrey.com, maurices.com, dressbarn.com, lanebryant.com, Catherines.com, and shopjustice.com.

About the Human Rights Campaign Foundation

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation is the educational arm of America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender and queer people. HRC envisions a world

where LGBTQ people are embraced as full members of society at home, at work and in every community.

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