



Vets Do Ask Do Tell, LLC

<http://www.vetsdoaskdotell.org>

Newsletter Vol. 1 Issue 1

January 3, 2009

As we move into a new year there is lots to be thankful for. Our organization is growing and we have started to move forward in becoming a national organization. We owe this all to you the readers passing the word. May your new year bring happiness, riches and joy.

New Format:

As we grow we're finding it more difficult to find ways to let people know how we're doing simply by email. Our new format will have our newsletter in PDF format so it can be downloaded from the internet. Those who subscribe to our newsletter will now be able to save and print it out by just going to our site and downloading it with acrobat reader. This will allow our publication to grow and for us to bring more of the events going on to a broader range of folks.

WELCOME CHAPTER 2:

We are pleased to welcome chapter 2 in Spring Hill, FL to our organization. For those who aren't aware, the Spring Hill chapter is formed under the leadership of Wendi Goodman, a long time supporter and advocate of our organization. Wendi has been communicating with us since the beginning, and been an instrumental part getting our chapter handbook finalized and making it possible. Wendi is now working with her folks on getting a membership drive assembled to bring more vets together in the Florida area. Keep up the good work Wendi!

If you live in the Spring Hill area you can contact Wendi by visiting our site and clicking on the contact us link in the chapters area under chapter 2.

Dallas Texas:

We regret to say our Vice-President will be moving from Milwaukee to Dallas, Texas come March of this year. Once he arrives in Texas, he will however be forming a chapter in Dallas. Russell Amaya is one of the founders of Vets Do Ask Do Tell. His work here in Milwaukee can not go unnoticed as he has contributed a lot of time and energy to the organization. I am sure that he will put forth that same energy in Dallas bringing Chapter 9 into being. We wish Russell all the success in Dallas as he ventures off to form a new chapter in the Dallas area. Those in the Dallas area can contact Russell now by emailing him at vice-president@vetsdoaskdotell.org.

Interested in forming a chapter?

Those interested in forming chapters in their local areas can download a copy of our chapter manual under the chapters section of our website. It explains everything needed to form and run a chapter, if interested you can contact us for additional information.



Do you have to be a vet to belong?

A frequently asked question is “Do you have to be a vet to belong”? NO! We will accept membership from families, friends and sponsors who believe in our organization and the work we do. Our organization’s principle focus is on LGBT veterans, but no veteran will be turned away who meets the criteria of membership. Diversity is a key component of our organization as it educates folks about our community as well as the work we do.

Contributing to Newsletter:

We know there are a lot of you out there that have stories to share maybe something particularly special about your VA facility that may not be known by others. We can’t guarantee publication in our news letter or it being added to our site, but we will screen and add stories of weight to the newsletter and/or our website. If you have pictures to share with your story, make sure to place a description of what is taking place or names of folks in the picture when possible. Content can be sent to editor@vetsdoaskdotell.org.

Forgotten Vets Holiday Surprise

(Homeless Vets at VA, Milwaukee)

by Ellen Kozel

Two days after Christmas 2008, Vets Do Ask Do Tell in collaboration with Countryside Christian Church sponsored a holiday party for our forgotten veterans, who would be homeless if it weren't for the dormitories located at the VA, Milwaukee.

As we came in there was some puzzlement as to what was going on. Evidently there was Bingo scheduled but the bingo person hadn't shown up. Our Sergeant-At Arms, Bill Barrack introduced our group as the ladies setup the tables with cake and cookies, candy and water.

These vets are the forgotten ones. As we enjoyed the holidays, these men and women who served their country live in dormitories, the only place they have to stay. Some disabled, some with no families and some under medical care by our VA.

One veteran came up to us and was worried about his disability board. Myself and Russell Amaya sat with the veteran and explained his options.

To read more of this story you can go to http://www.vetsdoaskdotell.org/forgotten_vets.asp.



National meetings of Vets Do Ask Do Tell:

For those in the Milwaukee area interested in attending a meeting, the National Board meets every second Sunday of the month at their headquarters located at the LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St, Milwaukee, WI. Meetings are held in the Board Room and depending on number of attendees can be moved to the community room inside the center. All vets and friends are welcome to attend. Meetings start promptly at 1 P.M.

Up and Coming Events:

Open House – As previously announced in this newsletter, we will be having an open house on January 24th to let the public know of our organization. All veterans and friend are welcome to attend.

Easter at the VA – With the success of our holiday party at the dormitory 123, VA Milwaukee, we are planning to have a similar event come Easter time. We were asked to collaborate once again with the Countryside Christian Church to present an Easter party for our homeless vets.

Heritage Weekend - Reclaiming Our Heritage is the largest Memorial Day event in Milwaukee — even though it takes place the weekend *after* Memorial Day, on Saturday May 30 and Sunday, May 31. This free-admission, family-friendly event honors veterans and educates the public about veterans' countless contributions to American society.

Reclaiming our Heritage takes place at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center, the site of one of the original three National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers authorized by legislation and signed by President Abraham Lincoln.

A living history event, Reclaiming Our Heritage features reenactments from all the major military eras in U. S. history, starting with the pre-Revolutionary War to the present era. The event also is a resource for veterans interested in up-to-date information on VA benefits and services. Come and visit us at our table.

Pridefest Milwaukee – This year we will have a table located in the wellness area at Pridefest. Also, we have been asked to present an honor guard for the opening ceremonies. Pridefest this year will be held from June 12th through the 14th at the Summerfest grounds located on Lake Michigan.

Vets Journey Home – this is a 3 day retreat that will tentatively be held July 31st through August 2nd. The program is being conducted in collaboration with the LGBT Community Center in Milwaukee and the Center for Creative Learning.

Finding closure through telling one's story is difficult to achieve and the deeper truths remain untold; the deeper pain remain unprocessed.

The Vet's Journey Home invites veterans to come all the way home and find out that they are not alone. There are many who care about you--who are willing to walk point, be at your side, and cover your back. This time, you'll be coming home together with other veterans, and welcomed with respect and honor.

All combat veterans are urged to attend. The Vet's Journey Home is also recommended for in-country and offshore non combatant Vietnam veterans.

Additionally, all combat zone veterans from any era are urged to consider attending. Both men and women vets may attend the Vet's Journey Home.

We need your support to make this happen. You can get more information by going to our website at http://www.vetsdoaskdotell.org/vets_journey.asp .

Taking Pride in What We Do:

We, the members of Vets Do Ask Do Tell, LLC, pledge our allegiance to the United States of America and to our members in whose name we serve. We are resolved to promote justice, tolerance, peace, and good will among all men and women toward the end that all wars may cease, and to educate veterans in the services available to assist them with growth in a peacetime environment.

As you can see, we have a very busy schedule, donations, membership and support by other organizations help make these events a reality. Your continued support is required to keep these programs alive. We are making a difference.

~ Country, Honor, Duty ~

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