



# Vets Do Ask Do Tell, LLC

<http://www.vetsdoaskdotell.org>

Newsletter Vol. 1 Issue 2

February 12, 2009

This year is a very busy year for our organization. We started it off with an open house this past January 24<sup>th</sup>. Our major focus this year is Vets Journey Home. The open house brought many folks from the local area including staff from the VA to learn more about us and Vets Journey Home. I want to personally thank all that attended.

For those who are not members of the organization, you're always welcome to come and attend our meetings to learn more about us. Date and time of next meeting is presented later in this newsletter.

Ellen Kozel  
President

## Scholarship Fund:

Realizing some veterans are living only on their VA checks and/or Social Security due to disability and would still like to be a part of the organization we are working on establishing a Scholarship Fund for these vets. Our next meeting we will be discussing how to establish the fund and how it will be controlled and awarded. This is another step in the right direction to be all inclusive and allow everyone to participate.

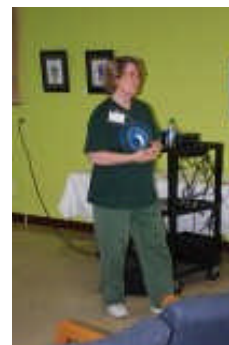
## Open House Successful:



Although not all of invited folks made it to our open house we deemed it a success. There were a lot of new faces, which was what we were hoping for. It was a great evening. There was a slide show explaining the work we do and our purpose.

The evening brought to highlight the Vets Journey Home program.

Patricia Clason and Rick Benoit from Vets Journey Home gave presentations along with a video on the program and how it has helped our vets and their families. Rick told his story and how Vets Journey Home gave him that welcome home. Rick will be in charge of our program come the end of July. There were representatives from the VA present who were able to discuss the program with Patricia and Rick. This helped bring two parties together that can lead to a good participation at this event. We also had inquiries from several of the people attending that would like to participate. We have the video available now on our site for all to view on our Vets Journey Home page.



Patricia Clason

As part of our program we also made several presentations. First presentation was to the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center for their effort in making their facility LGBT friendly. Second presentation was to the Cream City Foundation for their supporting the

organization with a grant to help us get started. Our last presentation was to a special individual, Maggi Cage of the LGBT Community Center for her dedication to the LGBT community as a whole.

**Special Meeting of the Board:**

There will be a special meeting of the Board of Directors and members of Chapter 1 this coming February 22<sup>nd</sup> to elect some new officers to the board. We had several officers who have moved or will be moving out of state and we need to fill those vacancies. Also due a heavy work load, our treasurer, Val Chisholm had to resign unexpectedly. We wish LeAnn all the best in her recent move out of state and also to Russell Amaya who will be heading up our Dallas chapter. The vacancies to be filled will be secretary, treasurer and vice-president. Anyone interested in applying for these positions should email [ellen.kozel@vetsdoaskdotell.org](mailto:ellen.kozel@vetsdoaskdotell.org) .

**Chicago News:**

We were informed that Chicago VA is now looking to establish LGBT support groups at their facilities. Folks in Chicago should encourage their mental health contacts on the necessity of these groups.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY:**

We wish everyone in the LGB group at the Milwaukee VA a happy birthday. This month marks one year since the group started. Good work and keep it up.

**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:**

**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 12<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup> at the Summerfest grounds located on Lake Michigan.

**Vets Journey Home** – this is a 3 day retreat that will tentatively be held July 31<sup>st</sup> through August 2<sup>nd</sup>. 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](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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