



Vets Do Ask Do Tell, LLC

<http://www.vetsdoaskdotell.org>

Newsletter Vol. 1 Issue 7

September 19, 2009

In Memorium

Senator Edward M. Kennedy
1932 - 2009

This past month we lost a great advocate for veterans and service men and women with the passing of Senator Edward "Ted" Kennedy. As well as serving on the arm forces sub committee in the senate, there are many private stories where this Senator from Massachusetts helped individual soldiers and veterans get services that they were refused. His presence will be greatly missed by those who serve and served this country as he was our strongest voice in Washington.

Happy Birthday to Us!

On June 17th of this year marks the first anniversary of Vets Do Ask Do Tell, LLC. For a first year, it's been a busy one. Small pockets and large events, but we managed to always have success at every one of them thanks to the work of all our members and partners who collaborated with us. Our accomplishments have extended beyond the boundaries of Milwaukee and have traveled across this great nation. Thank you to all our partners and well done to all our members.

Pridefest Winner:

At Pridefest 2009 we had a drawing for an annual membership. Congratulations' goes out to Marus Maichle of West Allis, WI.



There are new dates for Vets Journey Home published on our website. If you missed the one in July there is one being held in Maryland and Texas in October and again scheduled for May and August of next year in Wisconsin. It's a program for all combatant and non-combatant veterans to talk and tell their stories that have been kept deep inside them. If interested, you can apply on our website by clicking on the Vets Journey Home link. The program is FREE and the only requirement is your participation for the three days.

Dallas TX:

Attention LGBT veterans! The Platinum Mental Health Team at the Dallas VA will be holding an LGBT Group meeting on September 22nd. This is open to all LGBT veterans in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. The meeting will be held from 8:30 to 10:00 AM. If you're interested in attending you must go to the Platinum Mental Health Team and ask how to attend. All inquiries are confidential.

Summers over time to get back to work!

I hope everyone had a great vacation. Summer is over, although in some places it didn't seem like summer at all. We will be having our first meeting of the fall on Sunday, September 20th at 1 pm held at the LGBT Center, 315 W Court St in Milwaukee, WI. All are invited to attend. We will be voting on changes to membership categories and discussing membership privileges to be added to membership ranges and participation. This will be an important meeting for members to attend. We are hold this meeting one week late due to the Big Night Out event being held on the 12th of September which we hope you will all be able to attend.

Looking Towards Next Year:

Well folks, we started off slow with little to do and all of a sudden we were busier than we thought we could be. Our budget was tight and sometimes we didn't know where the money would come from, but it always cam when we needed it. Some of the things that will definitely be on our calendar for next year will be the holiday for our homeless vets party, Heritage Weekend, Pridefest 2010 and Vets Journey Home Aug 20th -22nd . October we are looking at being community partners with the Cream City Foundation for Coming Out Day. Also, Pastor Wendy has ask if we could collaborate on a workshop on Don't Ask Don't Tell. These are things to be discussed for the fall.

I would also like to propose a look at membership dues and possible modifications to make it easier for low income veterans to apply. This would require a full board vote and an amendment to the bylaws.

Programs:

We are looking into sponsoring two Vets Journey Home weekends next year. Also, a program to help our homeless vets transition from the dormitories to permanent housing more easily. Although the VA supplies a lot of the goods needed there seems to be a problem transporting the goods to their new homes. We're hoping to be able to take some of the burden off these vets to make their transition a little easier.

Saturday Night Buffet – a quarterly buffet held at the center with a buffet prepay tickets and tickets at the door to raise money. A guest speaker to talk about veteran's issues or a film on LGBT vets with facilitation open to the public.

I am also exploring the possibility of some paid speaking engagements on Don't Ask Don't Tell. I have several good leads.

Things We Need:

Events cost money plain and simple. We need help by reaching out to businesses within the community to help fill the gap. We can get a business to donate toward a need or supply a service at no-charge, it would leave money in our general account to run our everyday expenses.

Color Guard:

American and State Flag - approx \$500.00

Lanyards - \$100.00

Parade Rifles \$100.00

Flyers/ Posters/ Tri-Folds - \$800 per yr.

Printed newsletter – unknown

Advertising - \$2000 per Year

Help Wanted:

Treasurer to serve on the Board of Directors ~ We are in search of a person with good mathematical skills to become our treasurer. Responsibilities include monthly financial reports, maintaining financial records and bank accounts belonging to our organization. They must be able to attend meetings usually held on the second Sunday of the month in the afternoons.

Anyone interested in helping out can email ellen.kozel@vetsdoaskdotell.org

The position are strictly volunteer. If you have a friend that can help out please forward this to them. Board members do not have to be an LGBT veteran. We are a diverse organization servicing all veterans with a focus on the LGBT community and its veterans although our work extends beyond the community.

We are all bothers and sisters who served our country.

Vets Do Ask Do Tell, LLC does not discriminate against sex, race, color, religion, creed, age, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital status or parental status, sexual orientation or lifestyle or disability.

Case Study Underway:

Do you know of someone who is an LGBT vet but is afraid to use the VA, or hides their lifestyle while at the VA? Any person who is reluctant when it comes to VA benefits because of lifestyle would be a perfect candidate. We are doing a case study to find out why LGBT vets are not out at the VA. The program is totally anonymous. We ask for no names, just concerns of our veterans when dealing with the VA. They can take the quick survey on line by clicking on Case Study off of our main menu. This information will be used in helping us with the VA and also we have a national reporter interested in the results to do a follow up article showing our side of Don't Ask Don't Tell and how it impacts our LGBT vets after service. Let's try to invite as many as possible to the plate so we can better serve our community.

Gay Neighbor Campaign Takes Message of Love And Family To Milwaukee Suburbs, Reaches Out To Latino Community

Today, marks the second year Cream City Foundation launches Gay Neighbor, a major media educational campaign in Greater Milwaukee. Gay and transgender neighbors, and those who love them appear on more than **20 digital** billboards and bus ads. This is the first time the campaign reaches out to the suburbs with Digital billboards on major commuter freeway paths, which include ads in Ozaukee, Racine, Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties. Images of gay parents with toddlers and teens; gay singles and couples; gay senior citizens; families with transgender children, and supporters of the gay and transgender community will illustrate Cream City Foundation's *Gay Neighbor* Campaign. The billboard slogans ("Family. It's all about LOVE!" and "Ask Us About Our Families.") drive viewers to the campaign website "GayNeighbor.org". The website answers basic questions about the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender (L-G-B-T) community and issues they face.

New this year the campaign will also be featured in Spanish and provide information through MiVecinoGay.org. The Spanish slogan states that "El Amor Fortalece Familias: MiVecinoGay.org" This message will appear on a digital freeway billboard near downtown Milwaukee, and will be accompanied by a similar message on WMSE 91.7FM Orgullo Latino show. Visiting MiVecinoGay.org includes translation of the resource guides and links in Spanish. The inclusion of the Spanish version marks a first in LGBT Wisconsin history, and one of the firsts across the country.

"Our latino community is key to the creation of strong and respectful community, which is why we're proud to provide the GayNeighbor.org campaign in Spanish," says Executive Director of the Cream City Foundation, Maria Cadenas, the organization sponsoring the campaign.

Visitors to the website can get to know their neighbors by reading 100 stories about local families who are or love someone LGBT. Educational resources about offensive language, and guides for workplace issues have been some of the most popular educational resources on the website. In addition to featuring the people on the billboards, you can submit photographs and stories from the global community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people, their family, friends, and allies.

"The educational strength of this campaign is evident in the 40 community organizations, churches and businesses who have signed on to show their support of this campaign and it's message," says Cadenas.

"Creating this campaign was another year in the making. We did extensive research to determine the best images and words to convey our message. We are delighted to offer even greater diversity of families this year – on the billboards and on the website," says Denise Cawley, of Circore Creative the agency that worked on the campaign.

"This campaign has made over 17 million impressions already. It has influenced reading programs to add books about LGBT families into their libraries. Employers have used guides from GayNeighbor.org to adopt and advocate for inclusion of their gay and transgender employees. It has had people talking in barber shops and during coffee breaks," says Cadenas.

Val one of the neighbors appearing on the billboards with her children says, "Gay families are located all over Wisconsin, raising kids, working and having fun just like everyone else. Our family has game night, movie night, nacho night and family gatherings like any other family."

Karen, another neighbor appearing on the billboards with her partner and four children offers this advice: "You can get to know us the same way you would any other neighbor. Stop by and borrow a ladder or cup of sugar. Treat us as you would anyone else—ask the regular questions... how did you two meet, where are you from or what do you do? Tell your neighbors you are supportive too. Don't know the right words? Just try... it opens up a great conversation."

The Cream City Foundation's 2009 Gay Neighbor Billboard Campaign would not be possible

without the generosity of donors who support Cream City Foundations work and in particular the following key donors and businesses: the Joseph R. Pabst LGBT Infrastructure Fund of the Cream City Foundation, the Robert H. Andrews Memorial Fund of Tides Foundation, on the recommendation of Ms. Susan Andrews, Denise Cawley from Circore Creative, Peggy Morsh Photography, Kate Sherry, Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Milwaukee Chapter, *and* Nelson Soler from Multicultural Entrepreneurship Institute, Inc. We also want to extend special thanks to Clear Channel Outdoor – and our salesperson Chris Haworth for your ongoing support.

To find out more visit GayNeighbor.org or [Cream City Foundation](http://CreamCityFoundation.org) websites.

Cream City Foundation, 759 N. Milwaukee Street, Suite 212, Milwaukee, WI 53202

Cream City Foundation serves as a catalyst for social change on behalf of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender communities in southeastern Wisconsin. Their work includes strategic grant making, education, and media outreach.

Promotional Material:

Chapters requiring promotional material can email requests to the organization and we will be happy to supply them with a small supply of preprinted flyers. If the chapter is having an event we can also print flyers for the event. Contact us for more information.

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 ~

To subscribe to this newsletter write to president@vetsdoaskdotell.org . Events coming up in your local area that you would like to have printed in our newsletter must be submitted no later than the last week of the month.

Editor – Ellen Kozel

Up and Coming Events



Family. It's all about LOVE!

GayNeighbor.Org

The GayNeighbor.org billboards will be up in the fall, look for them.



Coming Out Day is an internationally observed event that is aimed at promoting awareness for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) individuals and families living honest and open lives. The Cream City Foundation Board of Directors has sponsored the rental of the Urban Ecology Center on Sunday, October 11th from 2pm - 4 pm. They've also secured the media sponsorship of Citigal Magazine and WMSE 91.7 FM. As part of this Vets Do Ask Do Tell will be a community partner for this celebration. We will have more on our participation as plans are finalized. Keep an eye out as we move forward.



Northern Wisconsin - May 28 - 30, 2010
Milwaukee, Wisconsin - Aug 20 - Aug 22, 2010
Mt. Airy, Maryland - Oct 23 - 25, 2009
Houston, Texas - Oct 16 -18, 2009

Open to combatant and non-combatant service men and women. This retreat is **FREE** to all who participate.



Come see 250 feet of granite with the power to drop you to your knees.

Most have heard the tales. Some have experienced them firsthand. Now, all can honor the tens of thousands who gave their lives to protect our freedoms during the Vietnam War.

Don't miss your chance to visit The Moving Wall, the awe-inspiring Vietnam War Memorial replica only at Milwaukee Harley-Davidson.



What: The Moving Wall—The Vietnam War Memorial Replica

When: Thursday, September 24 through Sunday, September 27, open to public 24 hours a day

Where: Milwaukee Harley-Davidson (Hwy 45 and Silver Spring Drive)

- "Respect the Freedom" Ride: War Memorial to Milwaukee Harley on Saturday, September 26 at 10:30 a.m.
- "A Tribute to the Fallen": Ceremony at Milwaukee Harley starts at 11:30 a.m. (includes 21-gun salute and special "Harley" tribute to the fallen).
- Gold Star Mother's Day prayer service and brunch: Sunday, September 27 at 10:30 a.m.
- Support the troops and get 20 % off: Stop into Milwaukee Harley the week of September 21 with an item for our overseas soldiers and receive 20 percent off general merchandise during the exhibit.

For more information visit our site.

Sunday, October 11th 2 - 4pm
at the Urban Ecology Center (1500 E Park Place, Milwaukee)

Join us for a Coming Out Day Celebration!

Featuring Live WMSE DJs, Belly Dancers, LGBT Film Festival Sneak Peaks, Square Dancing, and much more! Free custard and Hot Dogs! Everyone is welcomed!

For more information call 414.225.0244

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