

# 2006 Annual Report

*Transgender [acceptance] is what will ultimately tell whether the human race is truly ready to further evolve as a species both incarnate and spiritually.*

It was a bold statement made by a participant in FORGE's recent national survey, "Thinking About the 'T' in 'LGBT'," but we think she's right: opening up gender identity and expression possibilities is the next major civil rights and social justice movement that will help move all of humanity forward.

FORGE, a 12-year-old national transgender/SOFFA organization, is on the leading edge of this movement, working very strategically to develop and leverage rapidly-emerging opportunities to help people move beyond the biology = destiny boxes that trap way too many people, both transgender and cisgender. We invite you to partner with us by contributing funds to either or both of our current foci:

- ⇒ Empowering, developing, and supporting individual leaders -- particularly those on the trans-masculine spectrum and SOFFAs -- through scholarships (for those without sufficient funds of their own) to the FORGE Forward 2007 Conference and Intensives, to be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin March 29 - April 1, 2007.
- ⇒ Providing sustained, cutting-edge strategic planning, program design and piloting, and critical trans+/SOFFA representation on the national level. In particular, we are widely viewed as national leaders in inclusivity and SOFFA issues; sexual, domestic, and hate crime violence against trans and SOFFA individuals; trans aging; HIV and the trans-masculine community; and building bridges with the larger LGBT movement.

As you can see from this "Fast Facts about FORGE: 2006 Annual Report," FORGE provides key trans/SOFFA representation on critical national LGBT and mainstream coalitions and working groups; sponsors multiple free support and advocacy listserves; makes available dozens of free, online publications; and pilots model programs based on "reverse inclusion" and "universal design" social change models that may end up transforming the way all of us organize and advocate.

Please consider helping us help you by contributing to the FORGE Conference Scholarship Fund and/or our ongoing local and national work.

Sincerely,

michael munson  
Founding Executive Director, Chair

Loree Cook-Daniels  
Assistant Director, Treasurer



## Mission

FORGE is a Milwaukee-based, progressive organization whose mission is to support, educate and advocate for the rights and lives of female-to-male (FTM) transgender individuals and SOFFAs (Significant Others, Friends, Family, and Allies). FORGE is dedicated to helping move fragmented communities beyond identity politics and forge a movement that embraces and empowers our diverse complexities.

# Fast Facts About FORGE

DECEMBER 2006

## LOOK AT THOSE NUMBERS!

FORGE sponsored a record number of in-person support and community meetings in 2006: 41, attended by more than 400 individuals! Our ten listservs, with a total of 1945 subscribers, spread connections and information worldwide. Education is

also the function of our website, which attracts 7,000 unique visitors per month. For those who needed additional help, we received and individually answered more than 120 technical assistance requests in 2006 alone.

## GETTING THE WORD OUT

People can only benefit from the many programs and services FORGE offers if they know about the work we do. This year we mailed out six separate packets of flyers and letters to all or portions of the 1700 organizations and individuals in our database. We also averaged three to six email announcements per month, sent not only to our own FORGE listservs, but also to more than 60 other trans/SOFFA listservs. We authored more than 20 columns and articles in *Queer*

*Life News*, and ran 14 ads. FORGE was present at more than 30 community meetings sponsored by other Wisconsin organizations this year; met separately more than 60 times with various organization representatives and professionals; and participated in more than a dozen national meetings (both in person and by teleconference). We now even have pages on MySpace and Live Journal!

## “AND THE SURVEY SAYS...”

Three hundred ninety-four (394) trans/SOFFA individuals and 54 LGBT organizations answered FORGE’s 2006 survey on whether and how trans/SOFFA individuals and issues are or should be integrated into the larger “LGBT” community. The overwhelming answer was yes, we should be included, but the survey revealed many interesting experiences and key issues to be taken into consideration. Some of those details were shared at our November 30, 2006 Town Hall meeting and more will be available soon online at the FORGE website.

## RAISING PROFESSIONALS’ AWARENESS AND EXPERTISE

One of the most frustrating aspects of being trans/SOFFA is running into service providers who “just don’t get it.” In 2006, FORGE concentrated on improving trans awareness among those who help sexual assault survivors and therapists, presenting workshops on helping trans/SOFFA sexual violence survivors at the annual training conference of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault and the Southern Comfort Conference, and sponsoring two

Trans 101 and one trans sexual violence workshop for therapists and service providers. We also individually recruited and provided trans sensitivity training to five Wisconsin trauma therapists who had not previously focused on transgender survivors of violence and who then went on to introduce trauma counseling techniques to both the trans and larger community through our “Hope for Healing” series. On the trans aging side, we gave a well-received

**REVERSE  
INCLUSION AND  
UNIVERSAL  
DESIGN**

How can transpeople become “normal” for cisgendered people? Isn’t designing services for transpeople a waste of time, given how small a percentage of the population they are? These are the sorts of questions being answered in very practical terms through the “reverse inclusion” and “universal design” service organizing models FORGE’s Sexual Violence Project is piloting. Under the models, trans/SOFFA people lead inclusive, supportive groups to give others the experience of positive integration (reverse inclusion), and demonstrate how services designed to meet the needs of trans people can equal or improve upon services offered by the mainstream (universal design). Initial results are very positive, and FORGE intends to test the concepts further in 2007 programs.

workshop at Southern Comfort and continued our years-long participation in the editorial board and leadership council of the American Society on Aging’s Lesbian and Gay Aging Issues Network. We also represented the trans/SOFFA community at the first-ever national LGBT Aging Roundtable, sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in June.

## IT WILL BE THE LARGEST GATHERING OF TRANSPeOPLE IN WISCONSIN'S HISTORY

Although it's still several months away, the national buzz about the FORGE Forward 2007 Conference is already overwhelming! With 17 presenters at eight cutting edge pre-Conference Intensives, seven dynamic keynote speakers scheduled and a full line up of entertainment, it's hard to imagine where the 75 workshops with 15 additional caucuses and do it yourself workshops will fit into the weekend! For the first time ever, the Midwest is hosting a large,

national trans-masculine and SOFFA conference. Mark your calendars (March 29 - April 1, 2007) -- this is an event you (and hundreds of others) will not want to miss!

Not everyone can afford to attend this life-changing event. The FORGE Conference Scholarship fund will enable those who are low income, young, disabled, of color, and elder to join us.

## WHERE WE'D LIKE TO GO

If FORGE can foot the travel bills, there are several conferences we'd like to present at, including:

- American Society on Aging's annual conference
- National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs' training academy
- Southern Comfort Conference
- Trans-Health Conference
- LGBT Aging Roundtable sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

**THE FEDS FUND FORGE** Would you believe it? The Bush Administration actually funded a national transgender sexual violence project! FORGE won a \$5,000 U.S. Department of Justice grant this year to buy a laptop, projector, and software to help us reach more trans/SOFFA survivors of sexual violence, and the professionals who serve them.

## PRACTITIONERS AND ACADEMICS ARE LISTENING

"I have to admit that I feel like I've just tapped into a huge gold mine finding you!" said the author of an academic journal who had almost despaired of getting information on trans elders before he found FORGE and TAN. He had just downloaded "Transgender Elders and SOFFAs: A Primer for Service Providers and Advocates," and said, "I am incredibly impressed with this publication!" He then asked us to write at least two articles for his journal.

"I found those articles very helpful, interesting, and accurate," said a national anti-violence advocate about two FORGE articles, "Practical Tips for Working With Transgender Survivors of Sexual Violence," and "Seeing Past the 'L': Addressing Anti-Male Bias in Sexual Assault Services for the 'LGBT' Community." Both articles were originally published in the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault's Fall 2006 Education Journal, and are available on the FORGE website.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2007

Our core activities - sponsoring local support group meetings for those on the transmasculine spectrum and SOFFAs, hosting 10 special-interest listservs, developing new resources and services for survivors of sexual violence and trans elders, providing technical assistance, and representing trans/SOFFA issues in national anti-violence, aging, and other key publications and in-person meetings - will continue. And of course, the FORGE Forward 2007 Conference takes place in March and April! But our aim is even higher. In 2007 we hope to:

- Launch a national survey and coalition on **HIV prevention** in the transmasculine/SOFFA community, including revising and distributing a prevention brochure and special HIV edition of *Connectivity*;
- Secure funding for the Transgender Aging Network's survey on best practices in serving **transgender nursing home residents**;
- Formalize and expand our ongoing efforts to recruit and support trans-competent **health care providers and therapists**;
- Undertake a project designed to improve the quality and quantity of **gynecological care** accessed by transmasculine individuals; and
- Coordinate with national organizations to resolve Wisconsinites' challenges with the **Real ID Act**.

*American Psychological Association's Review of Books* said of 2006's new book, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Aging: Research and Clinical Perspectives*, "In a culture in which homosexuality has only recently dared to speak its name, the issues of transgendered individuals and bisexuals are still getting little attention. This volume must be commended for giving these individuals their deserved but long overdue attention." The reviewer was speaking partly of the book's second chapter, "Trans Aging," written by FORGE staff member Loree Cook-Daniels.

Although publishing in academic books and journals is one of the best ways to teach service providers how to respectfully serve the trans/SOFFA communities, academic presses pay authors little to nothing for their work. That means we need financial support to continue reaching these critical audiences.

## CONNECTED COGS

We've learned that the best ways for gears to keep turning and for all of us to gain greater momentum, is through connecting with others who share similar and varied experiences. FORGE is connected both locally and nationally to stellar organizations and outstanding individual thinkers. Some of our cogs mesh with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (aging roundtable), the American Society on Aging's Lesbian and Gay Aging Issues Network (leadership and editorial boards), Witness Justice (multiple advisory boards), The National Leather

Association's Domestic Violence Project (Midwest regional coordinator), and National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (first transgender organization to be asked to join). Locally, the teeth of our gears propel us all forward by connecting with SAGE-Milwaukee, Diverse and Resilient, Project Q, the Milwaukee LGBT Film and Video Festival, ARCW, The 16<sup>th</sup> Street Clinic, The Counseling Center, the LGBT Community Center, the Visioning Project's Catalyst Committee, multiple domestic and sexual violence coalitions, and many others.

## WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS...

We are extremely grateful to the generous donations from the Cream City Foundation (\$1,000, partially funding the T in LGBT Needs Assessment), the Johnson and Pabst LGBT Humanity Fund of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (\$3,000, Conference keynote speaker), LGBT Partnership Fund of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (\$4,000, Sexual Violence Treatment Modality series), Department of Justice (\$5,000, technology grant), and a private monthly donor (\$12,000, general operating funds). SAGE-Milwaukee has kindly served as our fiscal agent throughout 2006.

## THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIFT

\$25	buys refreshments and printed materials for one support meeting.
\$60	hosts one online survey.
\$100	provides web hosting for one year.
\$150	covers postage for one local promotional mailing.
\$250	assists with research, writing and publication of one meeting follow-up resource.
\$500	makes it possible for 4 people to attend the FORGE Forward 2007 Conference.
\$1000	enables FORGE to conduct one customized training to agencies or service providers.
\$5000	produces one issue of <i>Connectivity</i> newsletter.

## KEEP AN EYE ON THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL-SENTINEL

In May, FORGE met with a reporter from the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*. She had heard about the FORGE Forward 2007 Conference and thought it would be a great idea to publish during or just before the Conference at least a major article, if not a series, following a "new" transguy and his SOFFAs' transition or coming-to-terms process. We spent two hours helping orient her to the community and issues, then helped her link up with someone she's been meeting with since. Stay tuned for what will, we hope, be a major step forward in understanding!

## ONE EMAIL = CHANGED LIVES

It was just one little email, but it made a huge difference. FORGE was asked if we knew anyone who might be a foster family to a Milwaukee-area MTF teenager. We didn't, but we sent out an email and 30 families and individuals contacted the agency to offer her a home!



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[www.forge-forward.org](http://www.forge-forward.org) | [info@forge-forward.org](mailto:info@forge-forward.org)

**Yes! I'd like to join the FORGE team of supporters!**

**A. Please select where we can direct your donation:**

- 1.  The Conference Scholarship Fund
- 2.  Ongoing support of FORGE

**B. Amount of donation:**

- \$25.00     \$50.00     \$100.00
- \$500.00     Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*[We're working to make sure your donations will be tax-deductible. Our 501(c)(3) paperwork has been filed and should be awarded any day. SAGE-Milwaukee is graciously serving as our fiscal agent until that time.]*

**C. Where we can contact you:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Payment Method:** Amount of donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check (make payable to FORGE)

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

3 digit code \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please send your donation to FORGE, PO Box 1272, Milwaukee, WI 53201*