



Subject: Rally against violence and discrimination towards LGBT people this Saturday
(Milwaukee)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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With at least 11 suicides nationally of teens bullied by schoolmates, teachers, and even public officials, and mourning the violent deaths of four Milwaukee lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender (LGBT) individuals since May 2010, LGBT people and allies will take to the streets on October 23, 2010 to protest, educate, and organize.

The Peaceful Rally for Justice, Rights, and Respect will take place at 2:00 p.m. in MacArthur Square* and is expected to draw several hundred participants. Organized by FORGE in conjunction with an ad hoc body of community members galvanized into action by the May 7, 2010 murder of transgender woman Chanel (Dana) Larkin, the Rally has been endorsed by nearly a dozen organizations, including: Parents, Family, Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Milwaukee; Fair Wisconsin; Equality Wisconsin; PrideFest; Diverse and Resilient; SAGE-Milwaukee; Metropolitan Community Church Milwaukee; the Healing Center; Cream City Foundation; and Wisconsin Gazette.

"At this moment in time, with the mounting suicides of teens bullied to death because they're perceived as being LGBT and with the Milwaukee LGBT community reeling from the violent deaths of four community members since May, we can no longer afford to sit back and hope that 'someone' will take care of things," said FORGE Executive Director Michael Munson.

"We're taking to the streets to demand that those who spread or even countenance anti-LGBT attitudes and discriminatory laws and policies take responsibility for the violence and deaths that flow directly from those attitudes."

"That responsibility-taking extends to the LGBT community, as well," Munson continued. "We have at least as high a rate of domestic violence as do heterosexuals, and we abuse substances, experience depression and anxiety, drop out of school and run away from home at rates far higher than peers who are not LGBT. These problems are largely caused by the

discrimination and trauma we've survived at others' hands, but it's up to us to take on the healing process and stop the cycle of violence and self-destruction." To that end, Rally speakers and materials will help educate participants and observers about the linkages between anti-LGBT attitudes and violence, and about what steps individuals can take to address the self-harming behaviors that result.

Invited speakers include Police Chief Edward A. Flynn, Congresswoman Gwen Moore, the grandmother and best friend of the late Chanel Larkin, and other community leaders.

For more information, contact FORGE at 414-559-2123 or info@forge-forward.org.

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** MacArthur Square is between the Safety Building (821 W. State Street) and the Milwaukee Public Museum (800 W. Wells Street), between 7th and 9th Streets.*