

OUTREACH

Volume 1, Issue 5
December 20, 2010

TOGETHER WE CAN! —JOHN & CHAR CEPEK

Our “Top Ten” Reasons to Become an LGBT Ally



Gay & Straight: Activating Change Together

1. You get to sharpen your writing skills dashing off advocacy letters to both friends and foes of the LGBT community.

2. You will undoubtedly be invited to interesting gatherings where fantastic refreshments, both solid and liquid, are served, and where you have a chance to meet really famous people.

3. You get to practice patriotism; after all, doesn't the Pledge of Allegiance promise “liberty and justice for all”?

4. You get to march in the Pride Parade the fourth Sunday of June each year and feel like King/Queen for a Day.

5. You will gain the love and gratitude of LGBT friends and family.

6. You get to meet great LGBT people with whom you otherwise would have no contact.

7. You also get to meet wonderful fellow allies

who share your passion for social justice.

8. You will probably have the opportunity to interact with your local, state, and federal legislators (O.K., not always “good,” but important nonetheless!).

9. You will learn to speak up and defend your beliefs when, for example, someone tells a gay joke.

10. Finally, and most important, you will help to make the world a better place for all LGBT Americans!

Bottom line: It is up to you to decide what kind of an LGBT ally you want to be, from quiet letter writer to gung-ho activist. The important thing for you to know is that **everyone's participation is needed.** Just think how different things would be for LGBT citizens if all straight allies would get involved in some way:

- the entire country would have nondiscrimination policies in employment and housing;
- marriage equality would be the law of the land;
- “don't ask, don't tell” would be repealed;
- gay and lesbian partners from other countries would have legal immigration status;
- gays and lesbians would be able to adopt children;

In short, your gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender friends and family members would have the exact same rights—across the board—as your straight friends and family members!



John & Char Cepek: Indian Head Park

Inside this issue:

Together We Can!	1
Caroline's Corner	2
What's Happening 3 Things	2
Upcoming Events	2

Allied for Equality is a joint project of:



Equality Illinois and



Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays

CAROLINE'S CORNER

I am sure that by now, most of you reading this know that the *Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act* PASSED during the special session of the Illi-



Clergy from across Illinois stand together to support the civil union bill's passage in Springfield

nois General Assembly! The House of Representatives voted 61-52 in favor on November 31 and the Senate voted 32-24 in favor on December 1, 2010. The bill now awaits Governor Pat Quinn's signature.

I was fortunate enough to be in the gallery when both the House and Senate voted on the bill and it was amazing to see everyone's hard work, most notably Rep. Greg Harris, pay off with a victory. THANK YOU goes out to everyone who door knocked and canvassed, stood at a Farmer's Market, library, Pride Fest, etc collecting letters, called and emailed their legislators, wrote a letter to the editor and informed their community about the importance of bill.



Pam Cameron with the letters she collected for Springfield area legislators in support of the civil union bill

We are not stopping here! In the coming months we will be setting up community forums across the State to educate the public and explain what the implementation of the bill means.

We have always said that marriage is on the horizon after civil unions, so stay tuned!

Also, thank you to everyone who called and emailed their elected officials in D.C. to repeal DADT!

Wishing you a Happy Holidays and New Year!

3 THINGS YOU CAN DO

- 1. Employment Non Discrimination Act** (ENDA—H.R. 3017 / S. 1584): Please CALL the Capitol switchboard (202-224-3121), ask for your U.S. Representative and Senator (you just need your zip code) and tell them to pass ENDA now! You can also contact Caroline to get a template of the letter we have been collecting asking Congress to support the bill. We have collected hundreds of letters from across the state and will be collecting more! ENDA would protect LGBT individuals from discrimination in the workplace (nationally). **If you want to participate in an in-district meeting let me know!**
- 2. The Military Readiness Enhancement Act** (S. 4023): YES! The U.S. House of Representatives and Senate voted to authorize the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT). Thank you goes out to all the legislators who voted to end this arcane rule! Passing this legislation is a great step forward for equality.
- 3. Register to Vote!** Local primary elections are coming up on February 22, 2011. Make SURE that you are registered to vote so that you can participate and make your voice heard. The LAST DAY to register for this election cycle is January 25, 2011. If you need help registering, call the or email Caroline.

**ALLIED
FOR
EQUALITY™**

Gay & Straight: Activating Change Together

UPCOMING EVENTS

January PFLAG Meetings:

Please go to www.pflagillinois.org for a COMPLETE listing of meetings and info

PFLAG Kankakee: Jan 16 from 3-5pm (St. John UCC-1045 W. River St, Kankakee) *meets the 3rd Sunday of each month

PFLAG Parents of Transgender Individuals: Jan 20 from 7-9pm (please call 630-415-0622 to confirm the time and meeting location) *meets the 3rd Thursday of each month

PFLAG Oak Park: Jan 23 from 3-5pm (First United Church—848 Lake St, Oak Park) *meets the 4th Sunday of each month

Equality Illinois Events

For more info visit: www.eqil.org

Justice for All Gala: Feb 12 from 6pm-Midnight (Chicago Hilton-720 S. Michigan Ave, Chicago)

Civil Union Community Forums: Equality Illinois will be hosting informational forums about the newly passed civil union bill in cities across the state, please check: www.eqil.org/civil.html for all the details!

Check out www.alliedforequality.org "EVENTS CALENDAR" for a full listing of events!

CONTACT INFO

Caroline Staerk
Field Director, Allied for Equality
3318 N. Halsted
Chicago, IL 60657

Phone: 773-477-7173

Email: cstaerk@eqil.org

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS!

Twitter: [allied4equality](https://twitter.com/allied4equality)

Facebook: search "Allied for Equality"

Stories From the Heartland:

We need allies to participate in Stories from the Heartland! Tell us why you are an ally of the LGBTQ community in a video clip that is 30 seconds or less and help advance equality!

If you want to send us your own footage, email Caroline at cstaerk@eqil.org. If you want us to come and video tape you, email or call Caroline at 773-477-7173.