



Dateline

Monthly News Bulletin

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DignityUSA works for respect and justice for all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons in the Catholic Church and the world through education, advocacy and support.

National Board of Directors Convene via Teleconference

The **DignityUSA** National Board of Directors met via a teleconference call on Saturday, January 21, 2006, for their winter quarter meeting. This annual teleconference call in the past used a premier teleconferencing company whereby all directors called in to a toll free line and the national office budget picked up the cost. This time we tried a new company's process wherein each director called into a long distance number. This resulted in no cost to the national budget, and each director picked up the small cost of a long distance call.

Since this meeting was by phone and only two hours long, all committee reports were presented to the board members the previous week allowing time for review before the conference call. The conference call time was spent answering questions directors had about any of the reports.

One of the key points discussed, relevant to all committees, is the need to form committees made up of **DignityUSA** members not on the national board. All board members will be making committee formation their top priority over the next month. Committees are looking for members who have an interest or expertise in: Education and Advocacy, Communications, Fundraising, Marketing, Membership Growth, Theology and Finance. Commitment can be for the year as a committee member, or for a short time on a specific project. Most of those who had signed up as a committee volunteer during the recent convention have been contacted. (Note: If you volunteered and have not been contacted, or did not have a chance to sign up and are interested in working on a committee, please contact secretary@dignityusa.org and your name will be passed on to a committee chair.)

The national board discussed finances and cash flow. A motion, passed in December 2005, redefined and reorganized the processes for cash flow management, as well as defining the responsibilities of the office staff, the executive director, the finance committee and the national treasurer. This has significantly helped to speed up the process. A new auditor is under contract. The audit will be started on January 31, 2006.

Another "hot topic" for discussion was ways to increase donations and fundraising. Under current economic conditions, donations have been trickling in. We would like to see them flooding in. This is another topic the board will be concentrating on during the next few months. If you have any suggestions for fundraising, or would like to make a donation, contact our

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Executive Director, Debbie Weill at executivedirector@dignityusa.org. Donations may also be made online at our website www.dignityusa.org.

The next meeting of the board of directors will be April 21-23, 2006, in Washington, DC.

If you would like a copy of the minutes from any board meeting, please contact secretary@dignityusa.org.

If you would like a copy of the monthly financial statement, please contact treasurer@dignityusa.org.

National Office Activities on Federal Issues

DignityUSA's work on federal issues at this time is focusing on the proposed constitutional marriage amendment and the Hate Crime bill. Considerable uncertainty surrounds both issues.

The Religious Working Group, of the Coalition Against Discrimination in the Constitution, invited LGBT religious affinity groups to join them for the first time. DignityUSA participated in this groundbreaking meeting during which we discussed wider participation of LGBT religious groups in the Coalition, as well as important Coalition work on the marriage issue. This developing Washington based Coalition has great potential. It certainly could help facilitate faith leaders of various denominations to speak out on important issues. It could also lead to more collaborative work by progressive religious organizations.

Specifically on the marriage amendment, there are rumors of congressional action in the spring. With 2006 being an election year, the marriage issue will again be used to generate voter turnout for conservative voters. Congressional attempts to move the federal marriage amendment would be another indication of such intent.

Regarding the Hate Crimes bill, **DignityUSA** and many allies are working to include stronger language in the Senate version of the bill to protect transgender persons. The recently passed House bill protects transgenders, but the proposed Senate bill does not. Resistance is coming from both sides of the aisle in the Senate. In the past, the Senate has been considerably more supportive than the House. Things are different on this issue.

DignityUSA Vision Statement

DignityUSA envisions and works for a time when Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Catholics are affirmed and experience dignity through the integration of their spirituality with their sexuality and, as beloved persons of God, participate fully in all aspects of life within the Church and Society.

DignityUSA Thanks Donors

DignityUSA thanks those who have generously responded to our recent cash flow fundraising appeal. We also thank the Boston (MA), Denver (CO), St. Louis (MO), Seattle(WA) and Twin Cities (MN) chapters for contributing almost \$4,500 to this appeal. We sincerely appreciate your help!

Contributions to DignityUSA have been down some as the nation supported those so deservedly in need of hurricane relief.

Other **DignityUSA** chapters and members, as well as individuals, are encouraged to donate to DignityUSA today. Please use our website (www.dignityusa.org) to make your charge card contribution, or mail your gift to DignityUSA, 1500 Massachusetts Ave. NW #8, Washington, DC 20005-1894.

Thanks for your thoughtful response and support.

DignityUSA Young Adult Outreach

During the **DignityUSA 2005 Convention** in Philadelphia this past summer, about a dozen of our "youth" gathered to discuss issues they felt were relevant to them today. Members from Boston (MA), Philadelphia (PA), Chicago (IL), Orlando (FL), New York (NY), and Milwaukee (WI) were represented.

Some of the issues discussed were:

- the importance of Eucharist and faith,
- the welcoming process at different **DignityUSA**

chapters,

- the age gap within **DignityUSA** and its many chapters, the role of the Next Gen folks,
- How can Next Gen folks take on leadership roles within **DignityUSA**?

Many questions were posed concerning the purpose of **DignityUSA**. Discussion ensued on how the "purpose" can/should/will change with young leadership.

None of these topics were finalized. Nor were any easy answers given. The group hopes to continue talking and figure out what they can do for **DignityUSA** and vice versa.

The gathered group requested a special online youth-oriented group listserve with moderator approved membership and access. **DignityUSA** responded. A group list has been set up and will be moderated by J. Montoya.

If any **DignityUSA** member, ages 18-35, wishes to join this group, please go to <http://lists.dignityusa.org/mailman/listinfo/dusa-next-generation>.

**Happy Anniversary
& Congratulations to:**

**Austin (TX) - 27 years
Dallas (TX) - 31 years
San Francisco (CA) - 33 years**

In the News

In the December 2005 - January 2006 issue of *Call to Action News*, mention is made of **DignityUSA** hosting their annual reception at the Call to Action (CTA) 2005 National Conference in Milwaukee, WI, in November.

A photograph on page 3 shows **DignityUSA** national board members Lewis Tanner, New York City, Sam Sinnett of St. Louis, national president and Marty Grochala, Chicago.

A Romantic Night with Flowers and DignityChicago

DignityChicago's annual fundraising event for 2006 will take supporters to Blue Hydrangea Floral Design, Ltd., in Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood, to learn how to create a romantic Valentine's Day with flowers. The event will be held on Saturday, February 11, from 6-9 PM.

Dan Aquado, Blue Hydrangea owner, has donated his floral shop for the evening and will teach various design techniques. He will create a floral arrangement to be donated to Children's Memorial Hospital.

Attendees will be asked to pledge their support for **DignityChicago**'s ministries in the GLBT community, in particular — its liturgical ministries, advocacy efforts, spiritual growth programs and retreats, as well as support for **DignityUSA**.

Ramon Rodriguez, **DignityChicago** board president, said, "We are grateful to Blue Hydrangea owner Dan Aquado for opening his shop to DignityChicago and allowing us to hold this fundraiser there. We hope that folks will take home some floral design techniques to try out over Valentine's Day, while supporting DignityChicago's important ministries that have helped so many people to affirm and reconcile their faith and their sexuality."

DignityChicago has been a leading advocate for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community for over 33 years. The chapter supports the Chicago-land community through its core ministries of leadership, advocacy, spiritual growth and liturgy.

Help Wanted

Graphic artists needed to produce professional print material to market **DignityUSA**.

Volunteers, with marketing experience, who can help create professional marketing materials for **DignityUSA**, please contact Lewis Tanner via email lewistanner@yahoo.com, or Debbie Weill, ExecutiveDirector@dignityusa.org or by phone 1-800-877-8797.

**Happy St. Valentine's Day
God's Love is for All
and for All Seasons**