



# LIKEME LIGHTHOUSE BEACON

Kansas City's LGBT Community Center  
3909 Main St., Kansas City, MO 64111

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## Volunteers Needed

We are building a list of volunteers who would be interested in manning our LIKEME® Lighthouse exhibit table at the different summer LGBT events during the summer. Duties might include handing out brochures, answering questions about our community center, or selling merchandise.

Please email [Felicia@likemelighthouse.org](mailto:Felicia@likemelighthouse.org), if you would be interested in signing on with this fun group.



issue two

### Dear Reader,

Thank you for subscribing to the *LIKEME® Lighthouse Beacon*, our monthly newsletter. Tune in each month to read about the exciting things happening at the community center, what's going on locally and nationally in LGBTQIA news, and how you can get involved. Please feel free to contact the Lighthouse with any questions at 816.753.7770 or [info@likemelighthouse.org](mailto:info@likemelighthouse.org).

### KC Pride Weekend Wrap-Up

June 1 was a perfect spring evening for "First Friday." It was even more ideal for the two street parties at Hamburger Mary's and at the street blast thrown by the 2012 KC Gay Pride Festival as people danced to drag performers, go-go guys and gals, and Cazwell and the Ice Cream Truck Boys. On Saturday and Sunday, balloons, banners, tutus, feathers - and, of course, rainbow flags ---were all over the Power and Light District. The multicolored umbrellas were for show only on a warm, sunny weekend. Pridegoers wandered up and down, checking out the booths and chatting with friends. Some checked out the pool party and the community family picnic on the green space atop Cosentino's. On stage during both days various emcees, including Missy Koonce and Flo, welcomed the Heartland Men's Chorus, the Kansas City Women's Chorus, Summer Osborne, Big Bad Gina and the Mid-America Freedom Band, among many other performers. The few protesters shouting hate were silenced both by the band playing near them and by a group of young people spontaneously forming a "Chain of Love" in front of their signs. "The Power of Pride" was this year's theme. It was also the theme of Kansas City's own AIDS Memorial Quilt and the march on Main Street from Pershing to 14th on Sunday afternoon.



## Activist Spotlight

Sarah Gillooly grew up in a military family in Jacksonville, FL. She received a B.A. in Women's Studies from Agnes Scott College in Atlanta, GA and an M.A. from Loyola University Chicago before settling in Kansas City to be near family. Sarah and her partner own a home in South Hyde Park, which they share with their Boston Terrier.

Sarah has spent her professional career and volunteer time committed to community. She served as a community health educator in the Kansas City urban core, worked as a field organizer for PROMO, Missouri's statewide LGBTQ organization, and currently works as a public policy advocate for women's health in both Kansas and Missouri. Sarah has been a mentor to Kansas City Missouri Public School students through the YouthFriends program, volunteers with EQUAL youth, and serves on the ACLU Community Task Force.

Sarah is dedicated to progress and has secured real victories for Kansas City. Sarah participated in the 2007 campaign to add gender identity to the Kansas City Human Rights Ordinance, worked to save domestic partner benefits at the Kansas City Police Department, secured the first ever Missouri Gubernatorial Proclamation of World AIDS Day, and was instrumental in protecting federal family planning funds.

Sarah is running for the Missouri House of Representatives, District 24 Follow her on Twitter @smgillooly or on Facebook at fb.com/SarahG4KC

This column is NOT an endorsement of any political candidate but rather should be informational.



### Needs of the Lighthouse

The Lighthouse could use your help. We are in need of HP Office Jet Ink Cartridges 950 XX Black and 951 for Yellow, Magenta and Cyan. There is also a need for 8.5X11 copy paper and a First Aid Kit. General office supplies would be welcomed as well.

### National News

While African Americans have largely been thought of as anti-gay in almost every way, some major players in American culture have stepped up in support of gay marriage.

Colin Powell, former secretary of state under George W. Bush, told CNN's Wolf Blitzer he had "no problem" with allowing same sex couples the right to marry.

"I don't see any reason not to say that they should be able to get married," Powell told Blitzer May 23.

Powell's announcement comes only weeks after President Barack Obama's historic announcement that he supported same-sex marriage. Powell said he agreed with the president that gays and lesbians should be afforded the same right to marriage, as do heterosexuals. He went on to state he has homosexual friends who are in relationships that are what he believes to be "as stable a family as my family is."

From political to pop culture support, the ranks of people supporting LGBT marriage rights has grown in the weeks since Obama's announcement. Superstar rapper Jay-Z also added his support for gay marriage, a move some are hoping will remove the stigma of homosexuality the ultra-masculine, generally homophobic hip hop environment.

"What people do in their own homes is their business," Jay-Z said May 14. "It's no different than discriminating against blacks. It's the right thing to do. Whether it costs him votes or not-it's about people."

While the full effects of both men's announcements are yet to be known, it is one step closer to all people recognizing that LGBT citizens deserve the same rights as everyone else.

### WishMeAway Premiere

(follow on twitter @wishmeawaydoc)

A big voice for LGBT advocacy can now be seen on the big screen.

The long-awaited release of Chely Wright's documentary "Wish Me Away" finally came June 1 with theatrical screenings across the country, as well as an OnDemand and iTunes and Amazon rental releases.

As an award-winning country music sensation, Wright shocked the country and western world in 2010 when she became the first country music star to come out as a homosexual. This moving film documents Wright's emotional journey of coming out to both those closest to her and ultimately the world.

Critics largely have embraced the film that depicts poignant scenes from those closest to Wright, including her parents. The New York Post called the film "inspiring" and Wright's actions "brave." The New York Times said the film was filled with many "truly heartbreaking moments." Countless fans have taken to social media since the film's release, making many positive comments about the documentary and its message of strength and bravery.

Filmed over three years by Bobbie Birleffi and Beverly Kopf, the film counts down to the release joint release of Wright's book "Like Me," her record "Lifted Off the Ground" and the announcement of her homosexuality. Wright's swelling fears are obvious as she speaks directly to the camera in a series of confessionals, at times with tear-filled eyes, doubting whether coming out is something she could do.

From Chely Wright:

"The LIKEME Lighthouse, in partnership with the Human Rights Campaign, will help to spread the powerful message portrayed in this film by sponsoring a showing at a local film festival. The showing of "Wish Me Away" is planned for opening night of the Kansas City Gay and Lesbian Film Festival at 8:30 p.m. June 22 at the Tivoli Cinemas in Westport. "

## Interview with Kara Laricks, winner of NBC's Fashion Star

*Kara Laricks recently won the first season of NBC's "Fashion Star"-a reality competition series in which designers create collections to sell in H&M, Macy's, and Sak's Fifth Avenue. A member of the LGBT community and a native of the Kansas City area, Kara took the time to share a bit about her journey thus far.*

Part of our mission at the Lighthouse is to encourage others to embrace their individuality rather than stifle it. While you were filming Fashion Star, did you find it challenging to maintain your true self under the pressure of competing week-to-week?

Because designing is my second career, I think I may have worked out all of my "staying true to myself" kinks during my first career as a teacher. Being out and being a teacher was not easy. However, whether it was following my design passion whole-heartedly or simply "growing into my own," being myself on Fashion Star was easy, liberating, affirming and the best thing I have ever done. I was concerned that putting myself out there on a network as big as NBC might have some negative consequences given the current political climate. Shame on me - I have received nothing but positive feedback and love, which gives me great hope for the future.

You made quite the leap from a teaching career to pursuing your dreams in fashion. What advice would you give someone with a big, crazy, awesome dream?

Stay focused. Stay determined. Be kind, humble and curious. Believe in your vision - and when others may not, leave them in your glorious dust! ;)

Do you miss anything in particular about the Midwest?

Are you kidding??? BBQ!!! Oh, and of course, my family and friends.

We all have a coming out story, but there are so many people waiting to create their own. What was your biggest challenge and how do you think the experience helped shape who you are both as a person and a designer?

I know this may not be the norm, but coming out was easy for me - I was just so excited to find something that really felt right in terms of relationships. I always wondered why I didn't feel the same way about boys as my girlfriends did, so when I finally put 2 and 2 together in college, I was elated. Fortunately, my family supported (wait, I should say embraced) me from day one. That's not to say there were not bumps along the way. As a teacher, I was afraid that parents might not want their kiddos



in my class if they knew I was gay and I loved my job, so I stayed relatively quiet. That was my one regret and one of my motivations for going on Fashion Star. Not only did I want the opportunity to design cost/worry free, but I also wanted to show my former students that you really can be exactly who you are



and be successful. In terms of design and fashion, I hoped to open a few minds with my masculine meets feminine aesthetic. Fingers crossed, I did. [Any future plans to visit Kansas City?](#)

I am feeling swamped in the best way possible right now! I would love to get some quality quiet time in with my family and friends in Kansas City - AND I would love

to come check out the Lighthouse. I remember reading about the grand opening just about the time Fashion Star was premiering in March. I remember thinking to myself... I wish I was there - hopefully, one day soon, I will be able to thank Chely Wright in person for her amazing contribution to the Kansas City community.

## Kansas City Gay and Lesbian Film Festival

More than 25 new films will be screened in the 13th annual Kansas City Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, June 21-28 at the Tivoli Cinemas in Westport.

A preview night June 21 features the white trash cult favorite "Sordid Lives," starring Olivia Newton-John and Beau Bridges. Proceeds benefit the Good Samaritan Project.

The fest officially begins June 22 with "Vito," a documentary profiling civil rights activist Vito Russo, who wrote about gays in Hollywood in "The Celluloid Closet." Closing the festival on June 28 is "Cloudburst," with Olympia Dukakis and Brenda Fricker as an aging couple who escape a nursing home and head out on a road trip to be legally married.

In between are films by KC-raised filmmakers; "Still Around," a documentary about AIDS survivors; and an encore presentation of "Wish Me Away," a documentary about Kansan Chely Wright, the first country music star to come out.

Check out our Reception at the Lighthouse prior to the showing

here:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/429955737037893/>

Tickets are \$8.50 for evening shows, \$6.75 for matinees. For the full schedule, tickets and more info, [kcgayfilmfest.com](http://kcgayfilmfest.com).

"What I learned was that when you come out and find your community, it's everything. And the only way to find your community is if you can identify them."  
- Chely Wright

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