



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Northeast Ohioans to kick off WELCOME campaign for Gay Games participants
Rally planned for Friday at Tower City to sign WELCOME cards, autograph banners

Gay Games, LGBT Center and Plexus unite to host first-time event

CLEVELAND, Ohio – Northeast Ohioans are invited this Friday, Oct. 4, to start welcoming the thousands of participants planning to come next August for the 2014 Gay Games presented by the Cleveland Foundation.

With a brief program at 12:30 p.m. Friday at the Grand Staircase in Tower City, the WELCOME kickoff enables people to show their support by personally signing a WELCOME card that then will be sent to an individual participating in the Gay Games. More than 2,000 participants already have registered, with another 8,000 expected to do so before August.

The rally kicks off a 10-month WELCOME campaign organized by the Gay Games and its recently announced lead community partners, The LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland and Plexus Chamber of Commerce.

All three partners encourage organizations, businesses and individuals to help foster a welcoming atmosphere and get involved in the campaign. Those opportunities include: hosting a WELCOME card-signing party, acting as a drop-off site for WELCOME cards, posting a WELCOME poster or banner in the office, storefront, neighborhood, recording a brief WELCOME video or snap a WELCOME photo, etc.

QUOTABLE:

Phyllis Harris, executive director of The LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland: “This is the ideal time to unite the region to support the LGBT community and its allies. Like any major U.S. city, Cleveland has its challenges, but those challenges only give us more reason to demonstrate we are eager to host the Gay Games.”

Michelle Tomallo, president of Plexus, the local LGBT and ally chamber of commerce: “Sharing how welcoming our community truly is will only help make Cleveland+Akron stand out as a great destination for the LGBT community and its allies. We want them to know they’re welcome to visit any time.”

Tom Nobbe, executive director of the 2014 Gay Games: “No other host city has reached out on such a personal level to the participants. Now, they can be welcomed before they ever step foot in the region.”

To get involved in the campaign, interested parties can contact David Robinson at [drobinson@GG9CLE.com](mailto:d robinson@GG9CLE.com).



About The LGBT Center of Greater Cleveland

The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center of Greater Cleveland works to advance the rights, respect and diversity of the LGBT community. The LGBT Community Center seeks to create a community that celebrates the inherent worth and dignity of every person regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, and inclusive of class, race and ability. We work collaboratively with other LGBT and ally groups to address community needs and issues. For more information, visit www.LGBTCleveland.org.

About Plexus

Plexus, the LGBT and Allied Chamber of Commerce, is a nonprofit organization serving the LGBT business community, promoting supplier diversity, and advocating workplace equality issues in Northeast Ohio. Plexus is a strategic partner in the economic development of Northeast Ohio and serves as a point of connection for corporations, supporters, LGBT businesses and professionals. For more information, visit www.thinkplexus.org.

About the Gay Games

The Gay Games is an international sporting and cultural event held every four years under the founding principles of Participation, Inclusion and Personal Best™. Launched in 1982, the Games invite participation from everybody, regardless of sexual orientation, race, gender, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, political beliefs, athletic or artistic ability, age, physical challenge or health status.

The Games are intended to bring a global community together in friendship, to experience participation, to elevate consciousness and self-esteem, and to achieve a form of cultural and intellectual synergy. The Gay Games is open to anyone 18 years or older. About 10 percent of participants are from outside the LGBT community.

The 2014 Gay Games presented by the Cleveland Foundation will be August 9-16, 2014, in venues around Cleveland and Akron, Ohio, in the United States. More than 35 sports and culture events will be held, with more than 11,000 people from more than 60 countries expected to participate. For more information, visit www.gg9cle.com, www.facebook.com/gaygamescleveland or www.twitter.com/gg9cleveland.