



Anti-Gay Groups Target Gay Games with "Offensive"

By [Kevin Wayne](#)

Gay-friendly Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches plans counter protest

Chicago, IL - In an attempt to counter the 7th Annual Gay Games happening now through July 22 in Chicago, the president of the Illinois Family Institute (IFI) is planning a protest.

Peter LaBarbera, the outspoken executive director of IFI, hasn't called his plans a protest but rather an outreach. The IFI has announced a week-long "Love and Truth Offensive."

Earlier in the week at a press conference, Chicago's Mayor Daley welcomed the Gay Games and encouraged Chicagoans to support the Games.

"We're very proud of the gay community in our city," Daley said. "Every quality-of-life issue, the gay community has stepped forward as great leaders, and this is another example."

The anti-gay IFI plans a news conference today at 3 p.m. at the Congress Plaza Hotel in Chicago to introduce "ex-gay" and gay-unfriendly speakers planning to participate in the protest. LaBarbera warned that a "religious left" group may try to disrupt IFI's opening press conference.

The 'Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches', a gay-friendly and supportive group, through email is urging its followers to crash IFI's press event and pass out 'God Loves Us ALL' buttons."

"We are presenting an alternative message to Gay Games attendees to anyone with an open mind to hear it," said LaBarbera in an IFI press release.

"Our outreach includes several excellent speakers who embody the spirit of true Christian compassion on this issue. All of us embrace the life-changing hope of Jesus Christ and understand that nobody has to be 'gay.'"

According to the IFI release, the protest will conclude Saturday night, July 22, with an "informational Christian outreach" in front of Steamworks.

"Because we care about gay men, we will be in front of Steamworks urging them not to engage in destructive and highly dangerous behavior," LaBarbera said.

The IFI was one of the organizers of Protect Marriage Illinois a conservative anti-gay group pushing to place a measure against same-sex marriage on the Illinois November ballot.

The group submitted a petition that was rejected by the state Board of Elections because of invalid signatures. The Board refused to certify the measure.

The seventh Gay Games opens today and organizers say 11,650 participants from more than 30 countries will be participating. 100,000 spectators and visitors are expected in Chicago creating a \$50-80 million dollar economic impact on the city.

ChicagoPride.com is a sponsor of the Gay Game VII.