

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate release:  
February 27, 2012**

**Media Contact: Greg Greenhalge**  
*Development Director*  
Matthew Shepard Foundation  
303-830-7400 ext. 14  
Greg.Greenhalge@matthewshepard.org

### **Judy Shepard, Mother of Slain Wyoming Hate Crime Victim, Sets Chicago Speaking Dates**

*March 8-10 Events Will Benefit Matthew Shepard Foundation and the Local LGBT Community*

CHICAGO — Judy Shepard, whose son Matthew was murdered in Laramie, Wyo., in a notorious 1998 anti-gay hate crime, will speak in a number of Chicago venues from Thursday, March 8 through Saturday, March 10 on her son's legacy and her efforts over more than a decade to advance equality for all Americans.

Known for her support of the federal Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act and for hundreds of school and community speaking engagements since 2000, Mrs. Shepard is the co-founder of the Matthew Shepard Foundation, which has partnered with several Chicago nonprofits, companies and theater groups.

Mrs. Shepard will speak Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup> to hundreds of corporate employees from across the Chicago area, in conjunction with the Chase PRIDE Business Resource Group. Her remarks and subsequent Q-and-A session will include the legacy of her son's slaying, the continuing campaign for equal treatment of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, and the role that schools, communities, businesses and individuals can play.

Shepard and Foundation staff will appear at a special reception downtown at the Carlyle that evening to benefit the Matthew Shepard Foundation. Tickets are available at [www.MatthewShepard.org](http://www.MatthewShepard.org)

Judy will also keynote H.E.R. Day at the Center on Halsted on Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m. The special event empowers female-identified individuals through special programs and workshops. The Center on Halsted is the Midwest's most comprehensive LGBT community center. Information on the event is available at [www.centeronhalsted.org/HERDay](http://www.centeronhalsted.org/HERDay) or via the organization's 3656 N. Halsted location.

That evening, the Foundation partners with the Redtwist Theatre at 1044 Bryn Mawr for a special production of "The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later" directed by Greg Kolack. The play, taken from the verbatim statements of Laramie, Wyoming residents 10 years after Matthew Shepard's murder, examines the continuing legacy in that small city of the case and its worldwide publicity. Judy Shepard will welcome the audience after a pre-reception, and the Foundation's Laramie Project Specialist Susan Burk will conduct a post-show audience talk-back session with the cast. Tickets for this special performance are available at [www.redtwist.org/LaramieBenefit.html](http://www.redtwist.org/LaramieBenefit.html)

The Matthew Shepard Foundation was established by Judy and Dennis Shepard in 1998 and seeks to "Replace Hate with Understanding, Compassion and Acceptance" through a variety of educational, outreach and advocacy programs, including facilitated discussions for high-school and college audiences, Web resources and public outreach.

For a full itinerary and description of all planned Chicago events and more information about the Foundation, visit [www.matthewshepard.org](http://www.matthewshepard.org) or call (303) 830-7400.