

## Sign up now for the 2008 Celebration of Confirmation

We will hear from some of the strongest voices in the state on youth homelessness. We will learn and worship together, and celebrate the discipleship of our young people as they explore what it means to affirm their faith as members of the ELCA. We will experience music, celebration, performing arts and powerful speakers.

The event is like no other in the state; is the largest event our synods undertake together; and is intentionally kept affordable at only \$7 per person.

Help young people from your congregation (no matter what the size) experience what it means to be part of the larger church as they together powerfully impact youth homelessness in Minnesota!

Go to [www.mpls-synod.org](http://www.mpls-synod.org) for information on pre-events, curriculum options and registration materials. Sign up by October 29.

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must risk our resources and come together as a unified church for the sake of the world. We need to stop focusing on internal issues and focus on those who need to hear our proclamation of grace.

Our inreach will continue this fall and into next spring. We are proposing that the next steps in the inreach will be these: In late fall we will be inviting each conference in our synod to organize a guided conversation night. We will be inviting each pastor to bring two people from their congregation to come to meet others and to share their vision for the church. In the spring at the pre-assembly gatherings we will do the same with voting members. At the May Synod Assembly we will invite all those who have participated to come and hear what God is calling us to be and to do.

It is believed that our synod – our church – is only as strong as the relationships that bind it together. This inreach is a step toward strengthening those bonds and thereby making us more powerful and effective in our mission to bring a message of grace and the light of Christ to the world.

## Use the Expressive Arts to Heal Invisible Wounds of War

by Amy Blumenshine, *Coming Home Collaborative*

An approach both ancient and new for helping veterans return home from combat can be seen in the world premiere of a new play, “Return to Honor,” at Oak Grove Lutheran Church, 7045 Lyndale Ave. S, Richfield. CLIMB Theatre Company will perform the play about the challenges of military personnel returning home from a war zone at 3 p.m., Sunday, October 12. The play is free and open to the public. A free-will offering will be collected, and a social hour will follow the play.

The Oak Grove Lutheran Church Community Fund is sponsoring the play, written by award-winning playwright Buffy Sedlachek, in the expectation that other churches or schools will stage the play as a way of improving outcomes for veterans. The play seeks to educate about difficulties faced by many veterans as well as to inform about community resources available to them.

Veterans specialist psychiatrist Dr. Jonathan Shay, is among those who believe that the ancient Greeks used theatrical performances as a way to help veterans adjust after war. He has written books showing how Homer’s writing about Achilles and Odysseus relates to the suffering he has seen among war veterans and their families (*Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* and *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*).

Many experts in helping veterans recover from war experiences recommend that they engage in the expressive arts as a way of promoting healing. Theater, in particular, is credited with helping people move through troubled emotional states.

The Twin Cities Men’s Center ([www.tcmc.org](http://www.tcmc.org)) offers a free support group for veterans that uses drama and the arts to identify and develop strengths and increase coping tools. The goal of the group is to help participants with common experiences: panic, flashbacks, nightmares, disorientation, feeling unreal, family problems and difficulty relaxing.

It is because of these sorts of problems – invisible wounds of war – that both the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Area Synods passed resolutions to educate congregations and develop healing resources. As a result of the resolution, the office of Federal Military Chaplains brought a program to Luther Seminary, “Care for Returning Veterans,” September 30. Look for more information about this program on the synod Web site, [www.mpls-synod.org](http://www.mpls-synod.org), by clicking “Healing the Wounds of War.”