

More LGBT Day of History Ideas

October is LGBT History Month and GLSEN compiled the following list of suggestions for you and your Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) or student club. While WI LGBT Day of History is scheduled for March 2, 2010, please remember that any day is a good day to lift up and learn about LGBT history. So read on for some great ideas you can use at any time!

Speak up - make the invisible visible

First and foremost, LGBT History Month is about making the invisible visible. LGBT people already exist in English, Social Studies, Science, Math and Art curricula. The problem is their invisibility. For example, many authors who regularly appear on reading lists of American and British Literature were/are LGBT people: James Baldwin, Willa Cather, Lorraine Hansberry, Alice Walker, Walt Whitman, E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, Countee Cullen, Hans Christian Andersen, Audre Lorde, Oscar Wilde and Henry David Thoreau are just a few.

Make the Visible Visual

Bulletin boards, display cases and murals are great ways to involve your school community in recognizing the contributions of LGBT people throughout history. You can design your visuals around themes ("Famous Lesbians," "LGBT People of Color," "LGBT Scientists," "LGBT Athletes") or time periods ("The Modern Gay Rights Movement," "Gay Medieval History").

Diversify the Library

Do a search of your school library, and find materials that include information about LGBT people in history. Talk to your librarian about adding more such resources. Organize a book drive and ask students, faculty and staff for donations. Let public libraries, university libraries and book publishers know, and they may just give you some of their overstock!

Invite Guest Speakers

Many local GLSEN chapters and community-based LGBT organizations have "speakers bureaus" whose members are trained to lead school-based workshops for teachers and students. Try to involve speakers of varying ages. Youth can be particularly effective in reaching students, and LGBT elders can bring a broader historical perspective.

Bring the Teachers Up to Speed

How much do your teachers, especially the history teachers, really know about LGBT history? Share your resources with them so that they will be able to teach effectively, and so that LGBT History can be integrated across your school's curriculum.

Movie Night

Stage free after-school screenings of one of the films listed below. Or, screen the films in the evening, invite people from your local community, and ask for free will donations to raise money for your GSA or a local LGBT organization. Hold an informal discussion after each screening. Don't forget to make lots of popcorn!

Publicize Your Activities

Include information about LGBT History Month in your school newspaper, radio programming and announcements. Notify your local media outlets. They can cover your school's plans for LGBT History Month or interview participating students and teachers.

Go Beyond October!

October should not be the only time we discuss lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history. LGBT history is a part of, not apart from, your current curriculum. It just takes some research and planning to make it more visible. Think about ways to share LGBT material with your school community throughout the year. October should begin, rather than end, the discussion of LGBT history.

Additional Resources

Check out these great books and videos, and find more on the GLSEN BookLink at www.glsen.org or email booklink@glsen.org!

Books on LGBT History

- Faderman, Lillian. *To Believe in Women: What Lesbians Have Done For America*
- Feinberg, Leslie. *Transgender Warriors*.
- Jennings, Kevin. *Becoming Visible*. (Out of print but worth tracking down!)
- Marcus, Eric. *Making Gay History: The Half-Century Struggle for Lesbian and Gay Equal Rights*
- Miller, Neil. *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History 1867-Present*.

Films on LGBT History

- *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin* (83 minutes) Traces the life of Bayard Rustin, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s key advisor and dedicated civil rights activist.
- *Living With Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100* (60 Minutes) Explores a century of LGBT history by documenting the life and times of Ruth Ellis, who, before her death in 2000, was the oldest living African-American lesbian.
- *Out of The Past* (70 Minutes) 1998 film tracing the emergence of gays and lesbians in American history; GLSEN publishes a companion teacher's guide.

Not sure how to organize an LGBT Day of History at your school? Check out GLSEN's Day of Silence (www.DayofSilence.org) website for great organizing ideas that you can use for LGBT Day of History or any other day of action.

Then tell us all about what you did. We'll take your good ideas and use them to create an organizing manual for next year!

For more info or to tell us what you did email: brianj@gsaforsafeschools.org