

GSA Newsarama
Volume 5, Issue 10
March 7th, 2007

This newsletter is created by Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools to keep students, advisors and other community members up-to-date on the issues, events and news items that may be of interest to those working within Wisconsin schools, communities, gay-straight alliances and similar clubs. If you are no longer interested in receiving this update, simply reply to this email requesting that your name be removed from the list. Please include your current school, or previous school if you have graduated or are no longer in school.

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Feature

Remembering Barbara Gittings

On February 18th, the gay rights movement lost one of its pioneers: Barbara Gittings died at the age of 75 after a long battle with breast cancer.

Gittings had been publicly fighting for LGBT equality since the 1950's. In 1958 she founded the New York Chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis, the United States' first lesbian organization. In 1973 she was instrumental in the campaign that saw homosexuality removed from the American Psychiatric Association's list of mental disorders. She also served as the head of the Task Force on Gay Liberation (now the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Round Table) of the American Library Association, which fought to see positive content on LGBT people and issues in our public libraries.

Barbara Gittings has been featured in such groundbreaking documentaries as Before Stonewall and Out of the Past. She was the first recipient of the award named after her that is given every year by GLAAD (The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) to an individual or community media outlet that has made significant contribution to the advancement of LGBT media.

Barbara Gittings is survived by her partner of 46 years, Kay Tobin Lahusen.

Headlines

1. GSA for Safe Schools Scholarship Applications Due March 15th!

GSA for Safe Schools awards four scholarships of \$500 every year to students who have worked to improve their schools and communities for LGBTQ people and their allies. Applications are now available to download through our website, www.gsaforsafeschools.org. All applications must be received by March 15th and will be kept confidential. The scholarship recipients will be announced in April and will be awarded at our Celebration of Leadership at the Monona Terrace on May 19th!

In addition, two additional awards will be given out at the Celebration of Leadership: the Community Activist Award and the Educator Award! Do you know of a school professional or community member (youth or adult) who has worked hard to create safer learning environments and communities for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning students? If yes, you can

nominate them ONLINE at www.gsaforsafeschools.org/nominate.html.
Nominations for the Educator Award and Community Activist Award are due by the end of the day on Thursday, March 29th.

2. GSA for Safe Schools Spring Conference a Smash Hit!

Last Friday, over a hundred middle and high school students braved the snow to attend the GSA for Safe Schools Spring Conference in Madison. The conference featured 15 workshops, most of which were put together and presented by high school students from south central Wisconsin. The workshops focused on topics such as trans issues, teacher trainings and the impact of racism and sexism in our schools. In addition to the workshops, conference participants took part in various large and small group discussions throughout the day, talking about things like Day of Silence, coming out, and sharing stories and project ideas from their own schools and clubs. After lunch, we were all treated to two skits and an original song by the members of Proud Theater. When asked what was great about the conference, here is what a few attendees had to say:

- “The openness of ideas.”
- “Every workshop was really educational and interesting. I have taken so much out of today.”
- “It was fun!”
- “Meeting new people and learning so much!”
- “Pssh...EVERYTHING!”

Thank you to all of our wonderful planners and presenters who made the conference such a success – we could not have done it without you!

And a special THANK YOU goes out to Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ, our fantastic hosts for the event, and Lisa “The Lunch Lady” Koenecke, who filled our stomachs as we filled our minds.

Related Readings: Scholarships and Opportunities

GSA Newsarama is a publication of GSA for Safe Schools. Events, resources, and news items listed under "Related Readings" are not sponsored or written by GSA for Safe Schools, and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of said organization.

3. Tony Milan Scholarship Applications Due March 15th!

There are only two weeks left for LGBT students of color to apply for the 2007 Tony Milan Scholarships. The Tony Milan Scholarship Fund was established in 2006 by the House of Manolo Blahnik to support the educational success of LGBT members of the ballroom community (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ball_culture). The Tony Milan Scholarship Fund is granted to LGBT individuals of color who participate in Balls and are enrolled in an accredited institution of higher learning and/or individuals who are graduating seniors who have been accepted to an accredited institution of higher learning. Applications are due by March 15th, and to receive information on applications and guidelines please email info@houseofblahnik.com.

4. "democracy it is!" on Wisconsin Public Television

Wisconsin Public Television will be holding open auditions this month for individuals to host an educational program called "democracy it is!" They are looking for students from the ages of 16 to 18 to fill four camera roles, introducing the various segments and stories on the program. The host sequences will be shot over a two-day period in June. If you are interested, you can send your resume and a recent dated picture to:

Mathilde Andrejko
Production Assistant
Wisconsin Public Television
821 University Ave.
Madison, WI 53706

You can also email your materials to andrejko@wpt.org. Demo tapes and DVDs are welcome.

5. Amigas Latinas Scholarships Available for LGBTQ Latina Youth

Amigas Latinas, a support, education and advocacy organization for Latina lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning women seeks candidates for its annual Latina Les/bi/trans/queer Youth Scholarship Fund. Current high school seniors, who are of Latina heritage, identify as lesbian,

bisexual, transgender or queer and who are actively promoting understanding and acceptance of LGBTQ people in their school and/or community can apply for a scholarship for college expenses to be awarded this Spring.

Up to six scholarships (\$500 - \$2,000) will be awarded and include the final scholarships to be given in honor of Aixa Diaz, a founding member of Amigas who brought vision and commitment to the Latina community through her organizing efforts and knowledge and encouragement to Latino children through her dedication as a teacher. The deadline for submission is March 31, 2007. To receive an application, send an email to info@amigasLatinas.org.

6. Young Womynz Empowerment Conference in Milwaukee April 27th – 29th

Project Q of Milwaukee is looking for lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and straight allied female-identified youth (ages 24 and under) to attend a weekend retreat from April 27th through the 29th. At the retreat you will have the opportunity to raise your own awareness and participate in educational activities in a supportive and empowering environment. The registration fee is \$25, but scholarships are available upon request. Space is limited, so reserve your spot by contacting Maureen (Mo) White at (414) 223-3220 x114 or by emailing mo@projectq.org.

They are also still seeking youth and adult volunteers! More information about the conference may be found at www.projectq.org.

7. Register Your School Online for Day of Silence

April 18th will mark the 11th annual Day of Silence, a day on which thousands of students all across the country go silent, quietly protesting the harassment and struggles faced by LGBT people. Day of Silence is one of the largest student-led actions in the U.S. and students of all ages, from elementary through college, join in the protest. The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) has been essential to the growth and continuation of this event, and they'd like to know which schools are planning on participating. You can officially register through their website at: <http://www.dayofsilence.org/content/getinvolved.html>

8. 2007 LEAGUE Foundation Scholarships Still Available

The LEAGUE Foundation has been helping LGBT-identified students attend institutions of higher learning since 1996. In fact, last year one of the scholarships was awarded to a student from Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. LEAGUE will be accepting applications until April 27th, 2007. To learn more about the scholarships that are available through LEAGUE or to download an application please visit: <http://www.league-att.org/foundation/>

9. Triangle Foundation National Summer Camp for LGBTQ Youth

The Triangle Foundation, along with PFLAG and other supporting organizations, has announced that this year's "Camping.OUT" will take place from August 14th through the 19th. The camp is to open lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and allied youth (aged 13 – 17) from all across the United States. Camping.OUT will include opportunities to develop your leadership and activism skills, as well as all the other fun things that summer camp is supposed to have. The registration fee is \$525, but the Triangle Foundation will do everything they can to make sure that any students who wants to come, can. For more information, or to view photos from last year's Camping.OUT, visit www.campingout.org.

Related Readings: News

10. Des Moines Register - Governor Signs Bill to Ban School Bullying

On Monday, March 5th, Iowa Governor Chet Culver signed a bill into law that effectively bans all bullying from schools. Currently, only 77 of Iowa's 365 school districts have anti-harassment policies that include sexual orientation. Now that this bill has passed, school districts have until September 1st to establish policies that seek to prevent and punish bullying or harassment of any student. You can read the full story here:

<http://desmoinesregister.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070306/NEWS02/703060407/1001/NEWS>

11. Wisconsin State Journal - States Consider Laws to Curb Cyberbullies

There's a new type of bully out there: the cyberbully. The internet has given bullies a new tool with which to harass or taunt other youth, and they can do it anonymously. States like Rhode Island and Oregon are proposing legislation that would define and outline policies to help stamp out cyberbullying, but many argue that it would either be ineffective, or could potentially infringe on

students' free speech rights. To read the full article, click here:
<http://www.madison.com/archives/read.php?ref=/wsj/2007/02/22/0702210689.php>

12. ACLU Online – New Jersey Supreme Court Rules that Schools Must Protect Students from Bias-Based Bullying

The Garden State has made yet another step on the road to LGBT equality: the New Jersey Supreme Court recently ruled that the state's nondiscrimination policies must be extended to protect students from bias-based harassment and bullying. Chief Justice James R. Zazzali was quoted as saying, "Reasonable measures are required to protect our youth, a duty that schools are more than capable of performing." You can read the full story on the ACLU's website at:
<http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/28618prs20070221.html>

13. The Salt Lake Tribune – Bill That Targets Gay Clubs in Schools Goes to Governor

A bill designed to block the formation and success of gay-straight alliances has passed the Utah legislature and is on its way to the Governor's desk. The bill, which states that school clubs cannot violate "the boundaries of socially appropriate behavior", has been the focus of much debate over the past couple of years. While some argue that federal law would override this bill and make the blocking of GSAs illegal, others claim that the ambiguous wording of it will create a loophole through which administrators can deny the formation of LGBT-related clubs. To read more about it, click here:
http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_5313092?source=email
