

GSA Newsarama
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This newsletter is created by Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools to keep students, school professionals 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

Thousands Participate in Day of Silence in Wisconsin

The stories are pouring in – last Wednesday’s Day of Silence was a huge success in Wisconsin! From what I can gather, well over a thousand students chose to remain silent during the school day, and many MANY more showed support for the event by wearing ribbons, buttons, t-shirts and stickers.

We’ve heard stories of protestors in Wauwatosa and a Night of Noise in Appleton; a film crew in Mount Horeb and silent lunches in West Bend. Some teachers were angry that students weren’t talking in class, and other teachers were angry because there weren’t any Day of Silence t-shirts left for them to buy. Some principals threatened students with suspension, and some wore rainbow ribbons to show their support. I even heard that a choir teacher in Madison did his darnedest to be a “silent conductor”, but it was harder than he imagined.

While Day of Silence looks different at every school, there is a common thread that ties them all together: YOU! Day of Silence is a success because of the amazing work, dedication and courage that all of you put into it. Remember: for every student that tries to get you to talk, there is a student who is very grateful to have allies like you at school. For every teacher who marks your grade down for not participating, there is a teacher who is very impressed with your commitment and strength. Because of your efforts, schools in Wisconsin become a little safer every day.

We’re still working on collecting more stories and pictures to get up on our website. For now, you can read a great newspaper article from “Greater Milwaukee Today” that highlights this year’s Day of Silence activities in both West Bend High Schools:

http://www.gmtoday.com/news/local_stories/2007/April_07/04192007_10.asp

Go Suns!!! Go Spartans!!!

Headlines

1. Apply NOW for 2007 Leadership Training Institute – only 3 days left!!!

Do you consider yourself to be the type of person who makes change happen? Do you want to take your organizing skills to the next step? Are you interested in being a (better) leader in your student club?

LTI is the answer for you!

We are currently accepting applications for our August 18-20, 2007 Leadership Training Institute (LTI). This is our BIG DEAL leadership event for student organizers. Up to 30 Wisconsin high school-age students will be selected to participate in LTI based on demonstrated or potential leadership capacity. You don't already have to be a leader in your club or school to apply – we want to help you develop these skills!

Visit www.GSAforSafeSchools.org to download an LTI application and registration materials today and to read what some of the past participants have to say about their experiences.

Applications are due by Noon on Friday, April 27th. Please call Brian J at (608) 661-4141 or drop him an email at brianj@gsaforsafeschools.org if you have any questions!

2. GSA for Safe Schools Seeks Student Planners to Help with the “Take It Apart” Project

Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools is searching for dedicated middle school and high school students who would like to participate in the planning and implementation of our new project: Take It Apart. The goal of Take It Apart is to increase awareness about the ongoing impact of race and racism on youth in our school communities and to increase the ability and commitment of youth to actively challenge the racism and racist attitudes that create unsafe schools.

We're currently looking for students from the Madison and surrounding areas to help plan an early June meet-up for students of color, and a fall retreat to teach people how to actively resist racism. Students of all backgrounds, sexual and gender identities and abilities encouraged to participate!

Student planners would need to be available for 3 to 4 meetings in May, as well as occasional meetings throughout the summer. If you are interested in helping GSA for Safe Schools with the planning of this ongoing project, please contact Brian Juchems at (608) 661-4141 or email him at brianj@gsaforsafeschools.org. Please also let us know if you are interested in participating but have concerns about transportation.

Related Readings: Scholarships and Opportunities

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

3. MADISON PRIDE PROM!!!

We have the details for Pride Prom for you! This year's Pride Prom will be held from 7 to 10 P.M. on Friday, May 25th at the Lussier Family Heritage Center on Lake Farm Road (one mile south of the Beltline, off of Moorland Road). The suggested donation is \$5, but no one will be turned away for not being able to give. All proceeds from the dance will go to fund future LGBTQ Youth events in the area.

Pride Prom is for middle school and high school-aged youth only – IDs will be requested at the door. ALL DANCES ARE DRUG, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND HARASSMENT FREE.

For more information, please contact Teens Like Us facilitators Craig and Abra at (800)798-1126 or email tlupride@yahoo.com.

4. Become a Jump-Start Leader with GLSEN – LAST WEEK TO APPLY!

GLSEN (Gay Straight Student Education Network) is searching for its next team of student leaders! The application process for the Jump-Start 2007-2008 National Student Leadership team will be closing a week from today, on May 1, 2007.

The Jump-Start 2007-2008 National Student Leadership Team will be a group of middle and high school students who will support student organizing efforts across the country. Whether starting gay straight alliances/student clubs, developing campaigns or training teachers, these students are dedicated to safe schools for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Jump Start students represent various regions across the country, and receive training on strategic action planning, coalition building, leadership skills, and up to date information on safe school policy and legislation.

We are currently accepting applications from students who have prior leadership experience or seek to develop these skills. Students must fill out a brief application form and provide a recommendation form. Students can access the application and more information at www.GLSEN.org/JSapplication. Applications are due May 1st.

For further information please contact the Director of Student Organizing,
Benny Vasquez at bvasquez@glsen.org.

5. "Plugged In" by Proud Theater – tickets still available!

Think the youth in America aren't plugged in to the world around them?
THINK AGAIN!

Proud Theater Productions, in conjunction with Outreach, Inc. and The New Harvest Foundation presents, "Proud Theater: Plugged In", a fun and exciting evening of theater, music, poetry and dance written by and starring the talented youth of Proud Theater, Madison's very own LGBTQ youth troupe.

"Proud Theater: Plugged In" runs May 10th, 11th and 12th, 2007 at 7:30 P.M. in the Drury at Madison's Bartell Theater, 113 E. Mifflin St. Tickets are \$10 each and may be purchased at the Bartell Theater from 9AM to 4PM, Monday through Friday. Payment must be check or cash in the exact amount of purchase. Tickets may also be reserved for will call by calling (608) 661-9696, option #1, or can be purchased with credit card by calling (608) 204-0280.

For more information, please email proudtheater@gmail.com

6. LEAGUE Foundation Scholarship – last week to apply!

LEAGUE at AT&T is the country's first and largest Gay Employee Business Resource Group. The LEAGUE Foundation has been helping LGBT-identified students attend institutions of higher learning since 1996. Last year one of the scholarships, The Matthew Shepard Scholarship, 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/>

7. The Nation Magazine's 2nd Annual Student Writing Competition

The Nation Magazine is looking for original, thoughtful, provocative student voices to tell them what the most important issue is for young people in the 2008 presidential campaign. Essays should not exceed 800 words and should

be original, unpublished work that demonstrates clear thinking and superior quality of expression and craftsmanship.

The Nation will select five finalists (including at least one high schooler) and one winner, who will be awarded a \$1,000 cash prize and a Nation subscription. The winning essay will be published in the magazine and featured on their website. The five finalists will be awarded \$200 each and Nation subscriptions, and their entries will be published at www.thenation.com.

The contest is open to students at U.S. high schools and to undergraduates at U.S. colleges and universities. Entries (only one per student) will be accepted through May 31. A winner will be announced by September 4. Please send entries to studentprize@thenation.com. For more information, visit http://www.thenation.com/about/student_writing_contest.mhtml.

8. Teen Summit on Violence in Schools Set for Friday, May 4th in Madison

On Friday, May 4th, the Dane County Youth Board and Streets of Gold Productions will be hosting a Teen Summit in Madison that takes a look at the following questions:

- Has school violence ever affected YOU?
- Think the policies are too strict? Or too laid back?
- Want to do something about it?

This event is free and will feature drill teams, slam poetry, break dancing, and discussions on the often-controversial topic of violence in schools with leaders and teens in the community.

The summit will take place at the Lussier Teen Center in Madison, at 827 East Washington Ave. It runs from 6 to 10 P.M. Did I mention that it's free and that there will be pizza and prizes? For more information call (608) 445-7631.

9. Q.2.Go: Cedarburg this Saturday, April 28th in Thiensville, WI

Project Q of Milwaukee and the Cedarburg High School GSA are co-hosting Q.2.Go Cedarburg at Fiddleheads Espresso Bar in Thiensville this Saturday from 4 to 6 P.M. Project Q will provide some snacks, and will co-facilitate the event with the help of Cedarburg GSA members. The afternoon is up in the air – what happens (games, discussions, etc.) is up to the folks who show up!

The event is open to all LGBTQ and allied youth aged 24 and under. Anyone interested should go directly to Fiddleheads (192 S. Main St., Thiensville) – not Project Q. For questions, please email projectq@projectq.org or call (414) 271-2656 x120.

Related Readings: News

10. U.S. House of Representatives: Representatives Tammy Baldwin and Eliot Engel to Co-Sponsor Resolution to Honor National Day of Silence

Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin) and Congressman Eliot Engel (D-New York) have begun circulating a letter among their colleagues to gather support for a resolution that would honor the National Day of Silence and emphasize the importance of safe schools for all students.

We will be sending out updates on the status of this bill as it is introduced into the House of Representatives. If you would like to contact your congressional representative to ask them to co-sponsor the bill, you can use the following website to enter your state and zip code, and it will provide you with the name and phone number of your U.S. Congressperson. There's even a link that you can use to send him/her a quick email: <http://www.house.gov/writerep/>

11. HIVictorious, Inc. Press Release: "What If It Were You?" Poster Contest Winners to be Awarded by Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz

Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz will be joining HIVictorious President Bob Bowers at Shabazz High School in Madison this Friday, April 27th to announce the winner of the "What If It Were You?" poster contest.

The contest asked students to consider the question "What if you were HIV positive?" and create a poster to portray their answers, reactions, and feelings. Bowers said the winners of the contest "did a brilliant job of concisely and authentically relaying their answer through their art and words." The first prize winner of the contest will receive a Product Red iPod and framing for their winning poster.

The "What If It Were You" project provides young people the opportunity to step outside of their beliefs about this pandemic and personally address some of the root issues of HIV/AIDS, such as stigma and behavioral change, all the while empowering themselves and their communities.

HIVictorious strives to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in Wisconsin and throughout the United States through education, advocacy and community mobilization. They hope to increase EVERYDAY awareness and involvement in the fight against AIDS and to decrease ugly assumptions that divide and destroy our communities.

12. North Jersey Media Group: Evangelical Student Sues School

A high school student in New Jersey has filed a federal lawsuit against his school, claiming that school officials attempted to block the Day of Truth, an event he was planning for the Friday after Day of Silence. Superintendent Robert McGuire claims that they were not trying to block the event, but were concerned about the content of materials the student wanted to hand out, knowing that it could possibly upset other students. To read more about both sides of the argument, follow this link:

<http://www.northjersey.com/page.php?qstr=eXJpcnk3ZjczN2Y3dnFIZUVFeXk2NSZmZ2JlbDdmN3ZxZWVFRXI5NzExMDMyOSZ5cmlyeTdmNzE3Zjd2cWVIRUV5eTQ>

13. EDGE – Transgender Student Runs for Prom King

A transgender student in Fresno, California was part of the Royal Court for her prom last Saturday night. Cinthia Covarrubias, who sometimes goes by Tony, donned a tuxedo and competed with six other students for the title of Prom King. Unfortunately, she did not win the crown. At first school officials were hesitant to let Cinthia run for King of the Prom, but decided to add her name to the ballot because of the state's non-discrimination policy, which includes gender identity and expression. Many are saying that this is the first time an openly transgender student has run for prom royalty. You can read more about it here:

<http://www.edgeboston.com/index.php?ch=news&sc=gibt&sc2=news&sc3=&id=19788>

14. New York Times Editorial: Our Prejudices, Ourselves

In response to the firing of Don Imus, the radio host who made insensitive and inappropriate comments about the Rutgers Women's basketball team, well-known playwright and actor Harvey Fierstein wrote this editorial for the New York Times:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/13/opinion/13fierstein.html?ex=1177560000&en=711ec38c23112cf8&ei=5070>

If you have problems viewing the full article, let me know and I can send it to you in the body of an email.

15. CBC News: Cyber-bullying Could Lead to Expulsion in Ontario

In Ontario, Canada, legislation is being proposed that would add cyber-bullying to the list of offenses that could get a student suspended or expelled from school. The legislation was the partially the result of a complaint, launched on behalf of students by the Ontario Human Rights Commission, alleging the strict safe schools policy was having a "disproportionate impact on racial-minority students and students with disabilities." To read the full article, click here:

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/toronto/story/2007/04/17/safeschools.html?ref=rss>
