

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

Save the Date: GSA for Safe Schools Run/Walk Set for October 13th, 2007

Although we're still in the pre-planning stages, we do know this: Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools will be hosting a run/walk event on Saturday, October 13th, 2007 in Madison.

Part community event and part fundraiser (for us AND FOR YOU!), this event will also be honoring student athletes, school coaches and athletic directors that help create safe learning and PLAYING environments for LGBT students and their straight allies. Again, we don't have many details yet, but you should start thinking about student athletes or coaches that YOU know who have shown a commitment to safe middle schools and high schools for all students, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. We'll be asking for nominations a little later on down the road.

As we get closer to October, we'll also be looking for volunteers to help with the planning and course marshalling of the run/walk. Please send Tim Michael an email at tim@gsaforsafeschools.org if you're interested in helping out!

Headlines

1. GSA for Safe Schools Educator Award Recipient in the News

This past Saturday, GSA for Safe Schools held its 11th Annual Celebration of Leadership. In addition to awarding four Wisconsin high school students with scholarships (congratulations Ellie, Jared, Teddi and Ben!) and recognizing a local student with the Community Activist Award (way to go, Kat!), GSAFE also gave this year's Educator Award to Beth Franklin of Eau Claire Memorial High School.

Beth Franklin has been a long-time advocate for LGBT students and their allies, and has come under fire from time to time for incorporating LGBT issues into her curriculum.

Last week, the Eau Claire Leader-Telegram featured a front-page article about Beth and the amazing work she has done to create a safer school for all students. You can view the article here:

<http://www.leadertelegram.com/story-NEWS.asp?id=82930>

Yay Beth!

2. "The Power of One" Video Project a Smash Hit

In the last few Newsaramas, we asked for your help in putting together a video project called "The Power of One". All in all, we had more than 15 students share their stories with us on film, and GSA for Safe Schools created a video collage to show at the Celebration of Leadership.

It was a hit. People laughed, people cried...people were inspired! Thank you to everyone who took time out of your crazy end-of-the-year schedules to contribute to "The Power of One". We'll be doing a little "remodeling" of our website in the next couple of weeks, and our hope is that we'll be able to make "The Power of One" available for viewing. We'll let you know!

Related Readings: Events 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. GLSEN 2007 National School Climate Survey – PLEASE RESPOND

Every two years, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) conducts a National School Climate Survey to give lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQQ) students the opportunity to share their middle school and high school experiences. The survey is completely anonymous, and GLSEN uses the results to inform education policymakers and the public about the problem of anti-LGBTQQ bias in K-12 schools across the nation.

If you attended high school or middle school some time in the last year (2006-2007), identify as LGBTQQ, and are at least 13 years of age, please take a few minutes to complete the survey: <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/student/library/record/2061.html>

The information gathered from this survey will help GLSEN and other social justice organizations lobby and advocate for the rights of all students to be treated with respect in their schools. Many students in the past have used the survey results to advocate with their teachers and administrators for safe schools for LGBTQQ students.

**Update: yesterday, I saw a BRILLIANT idea at Cherokee Middle School: the GSA at Cherokee had printed out information about the climate survey and created a poster in the hallway of their school. On the bottom of the poster, they pasted the web address for the survey on vertical strips, so that students who want to fill it out can just pull the strip off of the poster and take it with them. Thank you Cherokee GSA – you’re always on top of your game!

4. Pride Prom in Madison & Technicolor Ball in the Fox Valley – THIS WEEK

Here’s the scoop on two proms that are taking place in Wisconsin this week:

MADISON: 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.

APPLETON/FOX VALLEY: Technicolor Ball, the 1st Annual Gay Prom hosted by YOUTHINK and GLBT Partnership of the Harmony Café, will be held on May 26th from 7 to 11 P.M. Liberty Hall Banquet & Center at 800 Eisenhower Dr. in Kimberly, WI. The Technicolor Ball is open to youth aged 14 to 19 who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or straight allied. ADMISSION IS FREE, and formal attire is suggested – it is a prom, after all! For more info, email harmonycafe@gwicc.org or call (920) 734-2233.

5. Madison SOS: “Speak Out Sister!” Young Women’s Leadership Forum

“Speak Out Sister!” is a project of the Girl Scouts of Black Hawk Council, the Wisconsin Women’s Network, the Madison YWCA and Girl Neighborhood Power. It will provide high school-aged girls (currently enrolled in grades 9 through 11) the opportunity to meet and discuss issues like representation of women and girls in the media, identity politics, sexism, and global politics.

So if you’d like to:

- Meet with a diverse group of 20 other Madison teen girls to talk about issues like identity, race, body image, and pop culture and to learn about local social justice issues, activism and women's rights
- Discover how you can speak out and make a difference on issues that matter to you
- Help create a cutting-edge resource guide for Madison teen girls
- Make lasting change by meeting with community leaders
- Learn how to become a stronger leader

...then "Speak Out Sister!" is the place for you! Participants will meet for six 90-minute sessions next fall to discuss the issues mentioned above, as well as develop leadership and activist skills like letter-writing, public speaking, and lobbying.

To apply, complete an application by June 1st (found at <http://www.girlscoutsofblackhawk.org/Portals/0/Pdffiles/SOSprogramapplication.pdf>) and send it to Madison SOS, Upper Level, 116 N Few Street, Madison, WI 53703. Girls of ALL backgrounds are encouraged to apply! Applications will be reviewed by a panel of adult mentors. Participants will be notified about their application status by June 15. For more information, email madisonsos@yahoo.com

6. No Name-Calling Week 2008

No Name-Calling Week is an annual week of educational activities aimed at ending name-calling of all kinds and providing schools with the tools and inspiration to launch an on-going dialogue about ways to eliminate bullying in their communities. Inspired by a young adult novel entitled "The Misfits" by popular author, James Howe, the No Name-Calling Week Coalition (created by GLSEN and Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing and consisting of over 40 national partner organizations) organized the first national No Name-Calling Week in schools across the U.S. during the week of March 1-5, 2004.

Over the past four years, No Name-Calling Week has grown in numbers and in success. The No Name-Calling Week Coalition has just announced the dates for next year's events: January 21st – 25th, 2008.

7. OutReach Awards Nominations

The 15th Annual OutReach Awards Banquet is scheduled for Friday, July 20, 2007, in the Main Ballroom of the Monona Terrace. OutReach is again turning to the community to solicit award nominations in the following categories: Woman of the Year, Man of the Year, Ally of the Year, Organization of the Year and Volunteer of the Year. They are also accepting nominations for Lifetime Achievement and Political Courage Award.

Although OutReach seeks nominations in all categories, they will not necessarily present awards in all categories. Nomination forms can be picked up at OutReach (600 Williamson St.) beginning on May 18th, and are now available on the OutReach website www.outreachinc.com.

8. The Nation's Student Writing Competition – LAST WEEK TO APPLY

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.

9. Scholarship Opportunity for UW-Madison LGBT and Allied Students

The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Alumni Council (GLBTAC) of the Wisconsin Alumni Association is accepting scholarship applications for the 2007-08 academic year. Current students (both graduate and undergraduate) as well as new students admitted (graduate, freshman and transfer) to the UW-Madison for the upcoming year are welcome to apply.

Application deadline is June 15, 2007 (the current posted date on application documents is incorrect, so please go by the date provided here), and the successful recipients will be invited (but not required) to attend a recognition ceremony during Madison Pride weekend, July 21-22, 2007.

NOTE: Applicants do not need to identify as LGBT; allies who have demonstrated advocacy on behalf of the LGBT communities are often awarded this scholarship, too. Other criteria include: demonstrated financial need and evidence of academic success in college or high school.

For complete details and application materials, view the following PDF file:

<http://www.uwalumni.com/media/chapters/glbtag/GLBTAC%20schol%20app%202007.pdf>

or visit the Wisconsin Alumni Association website:

http://www.uwalumni.com/home/chaptersandaffiliates/Affiliates/glbtag/glbtag_homepage.aspx

10. Tammy Baldwin Spring 2007 Listening Sessions

Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin has announced the schedule for her Spring 2007 Listening Sessions. This is a wonderful opportunity to have an audience with a decision-maker in our country and to let her know what matters to YOU. Below you will find the schedule for these sessions:

Tuesday, May 29th:

Jefferson – 10AM to 11AM, County Courthouse
Whitewater – 11:45AM to 12:45PM, Irvin Young Public Library
Evansville – 1:45PM to 2:45PM, Eager Free Public Library

Wednesday, May 30th:

DeForest – 9:30AM to 10:30AM, DeForest Area Public Library
Cottage Grove – 11AM to 12PM, Village Hall
Belleville – 1PM to 2PM, Village Hall

Thursday, May 31st:

Fitchburg – 10AM to 11AM, Fitchburg City Hall

Friday, June 1st:

Portage – 10AM to 11AM, Portage Public Library
Baraboo – 11:45AM to 12:45PM, Baraboo Public Library
Cross Plains – 1:45PM to 2:45PM, Garfoot Public Library

Saturday, June 2nd:

Beloit – 10AM to 11AM, Beloit Public Library

Monday, June 4th:

Monroe – 2:30PM to 3:30PM, Behring Senior Center

For more information, visit

<http://www.tammybaldwin.house.gov/PRArticle.aspx?NewsID=1386>

Related Readings: News

11. CNN: No Damages for Student Who Said “That’s So Gay”

Last Tuesday, a judge ruled that the California student who sued her school after being punished for saying “that’s so gay” is not entitled to monetary damages. Rebekah Rice, now 18, claims that she was reprimanded unfairly for using “that’s so gay” back in 2003 as a retort to students asking her rude questions about her Mormon upbringing. To read the full story, click here:

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/LAW/05/16/thats.so.gay.ap/index.html>

12. Fresno Bee: Crowning Moment – Roosevelt Prom Queen a Transgender Pioneer

In what may be a first in our nation’s history, a transgender student in Fresno, California was crowned Prom Queen last week. The administration of Roosevelt High School had no problems with Johnny Vera running for prom queen. "It's not our job to judge. We don't allow discrimination in any form here," said Vice Principal Ovidio Martinez. He figured Vera had a good chance: "He's well-known. He stands out. He's 6-foot-4 in heels." To read more about it, follow this link: <http://www.fresnobee.com/263/story/47430.html>

13. Santa Cruz Sentinel: Aptos Preschool Teaches Grown-Up Subject of Gender Identity

Teachers at Temple Beth El in Aptos, California hope teaching children as young as 4 about gender stereotypes and non-traditional families will make life better for people who face discrimination and harassment. According to the article, students are not led in discussions of sexual identity, but get spontaneous lessons when the issue presents itself. Kids are encouraged to pursue toys and games without regard to traditional gender rules and taught not to denigrate tomboys or boys who play with dolls. To learn more about

the inclusive education taking place at this preschool, click here:
<http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/archive/2007/May/13/local/stories/02local.htm>

14. Dallas Voice: Few Districts Have Rules on Trans Students

The Dallas Voice, a newspaper for the LGBT community in Dallas, Texas, recently reported that some groundwork is being laid in Texas to get gender identity/expression added to at least some of the school districts' nondiscrimination policies. Although supporters of such policies are not terribly optimistic about the reaction they'll receive, right now they are focused on taking that important first step: talking about the issue. Read more here:
<http://www.dallasvoice.com/artman/exec/view.cgi/72/5525>

15. The Advocate: Study – Gay Parents as Good as Straight Ones

The results of an extensive study released by the Canadian Justice Department and authored by Concordia University professor Paul Hastings, asserts that children raised by same-sex parents are as socially competent as children raised by heterosexual parents. The study was commissioned in 2003, and focused primarily on lesbian couples and their children. To read more about the findings, visit this website:
http://www.advocate.com/news_detail_ektid45156.asp
