

**GSA Newsarama**  
**Volume 5, Issue 4**  
**December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

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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

Portage Daily Register – “Not In My Town”

Headlines

1. Wisconsin Council on Children and Families Scholarship Opportunity – Application deadline is next Friday!
2. Holiday Season Volunteer Opportunities
3. 2007 PFLAG Scholarships – Applications now available
4. Martin Luther King Jr. Day – what do you have planned?
5. 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey becoming more inclusive

Related Readings

6. New York Times – “Supporting Boys or Girls When the Line Isn’t Clear”
7. First Amendment Center – 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit Backs Removal of Anti-Gay Signs
8. Agape Press – Fighting Back: Pro-Family Groups Find Ways to Combat Homosexual Agenda in Public Schools

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Feature

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Portage Daily Register – “Not In My Town”

This week the Portage Daily Register featured a front page, above-the-fold article about the struggles faced by LGBT youth in school, particularly in rural areas of Wisconsin. The article highlighted the conferences that are being sponsored by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) through Cooperative Education Service Agencies (CESAs), which address the issues of LGBT young people. Two area youth were interviewed for the

article and spoke about their own personal experiences. We here at GSA for Safe Schools would like to thank Jared Genova of Verona and Monique Walmer of Edgerton for sharing their stories and speaking out publicly on this issue. In fact, the title of the article, "Not In My Town", was taken from one of Jared's quotes. Please read the full article by clicking on the following link: <http://www.wiscnews.com/pdr/news/109887>

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## Headlines

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1. Wisconsin Council on Children and Families Scholarship Opportunity – Applications deadline is next Friday!

In celebration of 125 years advocating for children in this state, the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families is offering a \$1000 scholarship to be given to one student at their 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration at the Monona Terrace on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Applications must be received by December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006 (NEXT FRIDAY!), and you must be able to attend the event on the 24<sup>th</sup> to be eligible. There is no GPA requirement for this scholarship. All you have to do to apply is submit an official transcript, two references and a 500-1,000 word essay on how you have positively contributed to your community. For more details about the scholarship or WCCF, please email Julie Laundrie at [jlaundrie@wccf.org](mailto:jlaundrie@wccf.org) or visit: <http://www.wccf.org/projects/youthscholarship.htm>

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2. Holiday Season Volunteer Opportunities

Speaking of volunteering, the holiday season is almost upon us, which means it's the perfect time to lend a hand to those less fortunate. There are countless ways that you can help out in your community in December and January. Here are just a few:

- Have your GSA sponsor a food drive at your school for the local food pantry.
- The Free Clothing Center in Madison is looking for small groups to come in and help organize clothes that have been donated to provide low-income families with seasonably appropriate clothing. Shifts are available through January 12<sup>th</sup>, so this would be a great thing for you and your friends/family/GSA to do over the winter break! For more information, visit: <http://www.volunteersolutions.org/uwdc/org/opp/241588.html>
- Many non-profit organizations have adopt-a-family programs available. If you and your family are in the position to help out another family this

holiday season, this can be a really rewarding way to bring joy to those in need. The Salvation Army, United Way and the Parental Stress Center in Madison are great resources to learn about this and other volunteer opportunities in your area.

- For more ideas, or volunteer opportunities in your area, visit the United Way website at: <http://national.unitedway.org/volunteer/>

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### 3. PFLAG 2007 Scholarships – Applications available

For the fourth year, PFLAG is offering two levels of scholarships to students graduating in 2007 who have demonstrated an interest in serving the LGBT community. There are seven \$2,500 scholarships available, and three \$1,000 scholarships. In order to qualify, a student must have applied to an accredited higher education institution in pursuit of a bachelor's degree (this includes students pursuing an associate's degree with the intent of transferring credits towards a bachelor's degree). For more information on the scholarships, a profile of past recipients, sample cover letters or to download an application, please visit:

<http://www.pflag.org/Scholarships.122.0.html>

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### 4. Martin Luther King Jr. Day – what do you have planned?

January will be here before we know it, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day is celebrated on January 15<sup>th</sup> this year, which is the Doctor's actual birthday. This is a great opportunity for your GSA to plan an activity or exhibit in your school. Schedule a meeting with student council or other identity-based clubs to see if they have anything planned – make it a combined project! For some great ideas on organizing around Martin Luther King Jr. Day, check out: <http://www.dayofsilence.org/mlk/>

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### 5. 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey becoming more inclusive

The Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is conducted as part of a national effort by the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to monitor health-risk behaviors of the nation's high school students. On November 6<sup>th</sup>, State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster announced that the 2007 YRBS will include a question

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## Related Readings

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

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### 6. New York Times – “Supporting Boys or Girls When the Line Isn’t Clear”

Last week the New York Times featured an article on gender non-conforming children in the United States and the various approaches being used to meet their needs. It highlights testimony from a number of advocates for gender-identity rights as well as touching stories from parents who are supporting their children’s preferred gender expression. The full article can be read here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/02/us/02child.html?ex=1165986000&en=5e75ff124a971de5&ei=5070&emc=eta1>

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### 7. First Amendment Center – 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit Backs Removal of Anti-Gay Signs

A federal appeals court recently ruled that Madison police did not violate the first amendment rights of Pastor Ralph Ovadal (Monroe) when they forced him to removed anti-gay signs from highway overpasses in 2003. The courts ruled that the police were simply responding to reports of traffic hazards caused by the signs, not to the message of the signs themselves. For more information on the ruling and the case history, follow this link:

<http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/news.aspx?id=17815>

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### 8. Agape Press – Fighting Back: Pro-Family Groups Find Ways to Combat Homosexual Agenda in Public Schools

It’s always good to keep an eye on the opposition. Here is an enlightening article that highlights some of the efforts being made to “dampen the number of kids who participated in the homosexual clubs”. This includes the “Risk Audit Project” as well as proposed laws that would require parental permission before a student could participate in non-academic clubs such as GSAs. The full article can be viewed here:

<http://headlines.agapepress.org/archive/12/62006b.asp>

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