

GSA Newsarama
Volume 6, Issue 11
February 6, 2008

Read GSA Newsarama online at www.GSAforSafeSchools.org. Visit our website to download past Newsaramas in clean, easy-to-read PDF format.

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

GSA for Safe Schools Spring Conference – Registration Forms Available Now

Registration forms for the Spring Conference are now available on the GSA for Safe Schools website at www.gsaforsafeschools.org.

The GSA for Safe Schools Spring Conference is just a month away. It will be held at First Baptist Church in Madison on Friday, March 7th. Yes, that's the same place we had the Activist Retreat in January. "So what's different about this conference?" you might ask. Well, let me tell you:

Whereas the Activist Retreat focused mainly on two topics: the Wisconsin Pupil Nondiscrimination Law (118.13) and strategies for addressing racism in our schools, the Spring Conference will have no fewer than 15 workshops to choose from throughout the day.

While more than 50 students braved the snow to attend the Activist Retreat in January (thank you!), almost 120 students trekked through the blizzard to attend last year's Spring Conference. What is it with our conferences and snow??? We'll have to work on that.

Here's another big difference between the Activist Retreat and the Spring Conference: the Spring Conference is held on a Friday, so you would need to get permission to attend. All students who want to attend the Spring Conference must complete a registration form, which means getting a signature from a parent or guardian (unless you're 18: then you can sign it yourself).

Registration forms can be downloaded from our website at www.gsaforsafeschools.org. You can fill them out and send them in ahead of time, or you can bring them with you the day of the conference.

The registration fee is \$7, which covers all your tasty food and nutritious learning for the day. Some need-based scholarships are available, so please ask if you think you'll need one.

As with all of our conferences, the GSA for Safe Schools Spring Conference is a drug, alcohol, tobacco and harassment-free event intended for high school and middle school students who support making schools safe for LGBTQ people and their allies.

Questions? Email Tim Michael at tim@gsaforsafeschools.org or call him at (608)661-4141.

Headlines

1. Apply for the GSA for Safe Schools Scholarship

Hey seniors! Have you worked to make your school or community a better place for LGBTQ people and their allies? Do you plan to keep working for LGBTQ equality after you graduate?

Then we want YOU to apply for the GSA for Safe Schools 2008 Scholarship. GSA for Safe Schools is thrilled to be able to provide four high school seniors with \$1000 scholarships this year. Applications are available at www.gsaforsafeschools.org (or ask your GSA advisor for one!).

Completed applications are due on March 10th, and recipients will be announced in April. Scholarship recipients will be honored at our 12th Annual Celebration of Leadership at the Monona Terrace in Madison on May 17th.

Download an application today: www.gsaforsafeschools.org

Questions? Email Brian J. at brianj@gsaforsafeschools.org or call him at (608)661-4141.

2. Leadership Training Institute 2008 – Save the Date!

Leadership Training Institute, or LTI, is GSA for Safe Schools' biggest, awesomest event. LTI is a 3-day retreat, where students from all over the state build their leadership skills in a close-knit, high energy environment.

After investigating available dates and locations, we can now confidently say that LTI will be taking place August 23rd through 25th (Saturday through Monday) at the MacKenzie Environmental Education Center in Poynette, Wisconsin.

As you may know, students who wish to attend LTI must fill out a short application. Any current 9-12 student who attended LTI in the past and would like to return must apply to be a Peer Mentor. Past Peer Mentors who wish to return should apply for a Senior Mentor position. Applications will be made available in the next few weeks.

Student and adult staff will need to be available the 22nd through the 25th of August (Friday through Monday), 2008.

Please direct any questions about Leadership Training Institute to Brian J. at brianj@gsaforsafeschools.org, unless your question is "when will the applications be ready?" The answer to that question is "Soon. We'll keep you updated."

Related Readings: Resources 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 GSAFE.

3. PFLAG Scholarships Available for LGBTQA Students

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) has announced the availability of 16 scholarships for high school seniors who plan to attend an institute of higher education in 2008. PFLAG will be awarding three \$5000 scholarships, three \$2500 scholarships and up to ten \$1000 scholarships to students who self identify as LGBT or a straight ally, and demonstrate an interest in service to the LGBT community.

The application process may be completed online, or a hard copy of your application may be mailed in to the National PFLAG office at:

Suzanne Greenfield
Safe Schools Coordinator
PFLAG National
1726 M Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036-4521

APPLICATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY MARCH 15TH TO BE ELIGIBLE.

To read more about the available scholarships and find out how to apply, visit:
<http://www.pflag.org/Scholarships.1236.0.html>.

4. Blades Against AIDS Fundraiser in Madison

On Saturday, March 1st, the Madison Gay Hockey Association (MGHA) will be holding a fundraiser for the Madison AIDS Network: Blades Against AIDS.

Blades Against AIDS is an open skate which will take place at the Madison Ice Arena (725 Forward Drive). More than 250 people attended the event last year, bringing in over \$3,000 for the Madison AIDS Network.

Ice skates are available for attendees, so you don't have to have your own. Staffing and music for the event are provided by MGHA, and food is provided by Queen Anne's Catering.

This is an all-ages event. Tickets are \$15 for ages 16 and older, \$10 for ages 10 to 15, and \$5 for ages 9 and under. BRING YOUR STUDENT ID AND GET IN FOR \$5! The event goes from 8PM to 10PM.

Questions about Blades Against AIDS can be emailed to Shawn Waldron at swaldron2@gmail.com.

5. Queer-Friendly Valentine's Day Events

Valentine's Day is just around the corner, and a number of youth organizations are hosting events for LGBTQ youth and their allies. Here are just a few:

Madison: Valentine's Dance hosted by Teens Like Us and Youth S.O.S. Friday, February 22nd from 7PM to 10PM at the Lussier Teen Center
Questions? Email Abra or Craig at tlupride@yahoo.com

Milwaukee: Valentine's Day Speed Dating
Thursday, February 14th from 4:30PM to 7:30PM at Project Q
Questions? Email Warren at wscherer@mkelgbt.org

Appleton: Old School Hip-Hop Valentines
Saturday, February 16th from 5:00PM to 8:00PM at Harmony Café
Questions? Email Jesse or Charis at harmonycafe@gwicc.org

6. Point Foundation Scholarships Available for LGBT Youth

The Point Foundation offers scholarships to high-achieving LGBT students who demonstrate an interest in community service. Point particularly aims to alleviate the financial burden felt by students whose families have denied them support because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Applications are due no later than March 1st, 2008 and may be found at www.pointfoundation.org.

7. New PFLAG Chapter Established in Oshkosh

Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is pleased to announce that a new chapter has been established in Wisconsin: PFLAG of the Greater Oshkosh Area.

Regularly scheduled meetings will begin February 12, 2008 at 6:30 pm. Meetings will take place at First Congregational Church, 137 Algoma Blvd. in Oshkosh. Monthly meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month at the same time and location. All meetings are open to the public.

PFLAG supports LGBT people, their families and friends through local PFLAG chapter help-lines and support group meetings and locally and nationally produced resources. PFLAG educates families and provides public education on sexual orientation, gender identity and LGBT issues. PFLAG chapters educate their communities through a variety of local projects and nationally PFLAG continues to provide fair and accurate information about LGBT people and their loved ones. PFLAG also advocates for equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. Locally, PFLAG activists work for change in their communities. Nationally, PFLAG staff and volunteer leaders lobby for fairness and acceptance.

8. Free Screening of Documentary Film "CUT"

On Monday, February 25th, director Wendy Schneider is hosting four back-to-back screenings of her award-winning documentary "CUT: Teens and Self-Injury". Following the screenings, Schneider will lead Q&A sessions, sharing her experience of working on a two-year project intended to create more awareness and dialogue about self-injury among teenagers.

The screenings, which are free and open to the public, will take place on the Edgewood College Campus in the Anderson Auditorium at the following times:

Screening 1 – 3:00 to 4:30PM

Screening 2 – 4:45 to 6:15PM

Screening 3 – 6:30 to 8:00PM

Screening 4 – 8:15 to 9:45PM

Here is a brief film synopsis: Using the words, artwork and music of the young people struggling to make sense of their lives, "CUT: Teens and Self-Injury" provides an intimate look a largely unacknowledged problem that affects many thousands of young people, their families and friends. Incorporating interviews with parents, mental health professionals and rock icon Shirley Manson, who talks in depth about her own experience with cutting, the film's power lies in the teens' own understandings of the sources of cutting, their difficulties in talking about their struggles with those closest to them, and their reports on their

decisions to stop harming themselves. Urgent, searching, and profoundly moving, "CUT" issues a call to bring the problem of self-injury out of the shadows and reminds us that the first step towards healing is an honest acknowledgement of reality.

9. Queer People of Color Conference at UW-Madison

At the end of the month, the United Council of UW Students will host the Midwest Queer People of Color Summit. This summit will offer students from across the region an opportunity to explore new ideas and develop practical, productive organizing skills. The workshops offered at the QPOC Summit address topics spanning race, sexual identity, class, ethnicity, ability and religion. This year's theme is "Pulling the Pieces Together."

The organizers of this event would like to open up the invitation to high school students of color who identify as LGBTQ or queer. The summit will take place on February 29 and March 1, 2008.

If you are interested in attending this event, please contact Treese McCoy at multicultural@unitedcouncil.net or call her at (608)263-3422. Registrations are due soon, so please don't delay.

Related Readings: News and Publications

10. ACLU.org – ACLU Sues Florida High School for Suppressing Free Speech

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit against Ponce de Leon High School in Florida, which has been "trampling the First Amendment rights of students who support equal rights for gay people." The school has claimed that rainbow stickers and slogans such as "I support my gay friends" are disruptive and could indicate that the students are members of "illegal or secret organizations."

To read the full story, follow this link: <http://tinyurl.com/3yxgym>

11. Press Enterprise – Discrimination Suit Against Christian School Dismissed

A California Supreme Court judge has dismissed a lawsuit against a Christian school that expelled two students on the suspicion that they were lesbians. The two girls were expelled in 2005, and Judge Gloria Trask ruled that the school is not held by California non-discrimination laws because it is a privately-funded organization. The girls are expected to appeal the case.

To read more, follow this link: <http://tinyurl.com/2d4rja>

12. ACLU.org – Federal Appeals Court Says It’s OK for School to Teach Children’s Book Encouraging Tolerance for Gay People

Dismissing a lawsuit brought up by angry parents, a Massachusetts court ruled that "There is no free exercise right to be free from any reference in public elementary schools to the existence of families in which the parents are of different gender combinations." The book that started the controversy is called "King and King", a fairytale-style story in which a young prince falls in love with another prince.

To read all the details, click here: <http://tinyurl.com/24fhar>

13. The Badger Herald – College Protests Blood Drive

In response to their discriminatory practices, San Jose State University has decided to that it will no longer sponsor blood drives set up by university employees or campus groups. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has a policy that does not allow men who have had sex with another man since 1977 to donate blood. SJSU President Don Kassing asserts that this stance goes against the university’s non-discrimination policy.

To read more, click here: <http://tinyurl.com/2ajy74>
