

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

Passing the Torch: The Importance of Transitioning Leadership

This is a busy time of year: Final exams, school dances, making summer plans, et cetera. It's also an important time of year. With only a couple weeks of school left, now is the time for Gay-Straight Alliances to be having conversations about who is going to taking the lead next year, making sure that clubs don't fade away.

There are a number of things that students can do to ensure that their GSA will still be around next year:

1. Nominate next year's leaders now. It doesn't have to wait until the fall. Hold a "passing the torch" ceremony, where current club leaders symbolically hand their roles and responsibilities to next year's leadership team.
2. Create a 2008-2009 calendar. We already know that Day of Silence 2009 will be on April 17th, and GLSEN will be announcing the dates of the other big "days of action" in the fall (Ally Week, Transgender Day of Remembrance, etc.). Talk about which days your GSA wants to recognize (don't forget about LGBT History Month and the Martin Luther King Jr. Organizing Weekend) and ask for volunteers to take the lead on those projects.
3. If you don't already have one, put together a GSA binder. This binder can be used to hold notes, meeting minutes, and other GSA-related information. Ask current leaders to regularly update the binder and make sure that it's accessible to all group members (maybe your GSA advisor will let you keep it in his/her classroom or office). The binder can be passed down through the years to help new students plan for events.
4. Hold a mini GSA retreat during the summer. You can use the time to plan for the next year, set a date for your first meeting, and make posters to advertise the club so you attract new members in the fall. Make sure to bring snacks. Everybody likes snacks.
5. Encourage a student or two to apply for GSA for Safe Schools Leadership Training Institute in August. We still have a few spots open for LTI, so make sure that your school is represented. LTI attendees will spend three days with other GSA activists getting ready for the new school year, and they'll come back with a HUGE binder full of information and the skills and motivation to help your GSA be the best it can be. Download applications at www.gsaforsafeschools.org.

For more great information on how to keep the momentum going, download GLSEN's Jump-Start 8: Evaluation, Continuation, Celebration at <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/news/record/2226.html>.

And don't forget to let us know of any changes to your club for next year. You can use our registration tool at www.gsaforsafeschools.org/gsa_register.html to

share new advisor information and contact info for current or new student leaders.

Headlines

1. Save the Date: GSA for Safe Schools Walk/Run/Eat 2008

It's official: The Walk/Run/Eat was such a success last fall that we've decided to do it again. This year, we plan to make the Walk/Run/Eat even bigger and better. Here is what we know so far:

What: GSA for Safe Schools Walk/Run/Eat 2008

When: Saturday, October 11th (National Coming Out Day!)

Where: Warner Park on Madison's north side

Who: You, your friends, your family, your neighbors

Once again, Queen Anne's Catering has generously offered to donate a picnic-style lunch for all participants. This year's event will feature a 5K walk, a 5K run and a 10K run and is open to walkers and runners of all abilities.

Participants will be invited to register individually or as a team, so start thinking about who you might want on your team now. We'll be sending out more details this summer as they come into focus.

If you have questions about the Walk/Run/Eat, they can be directed to Tim at tim@gsaforsafeschools.org or at 608.661.4141.

2. The Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals: More Info Coming Your Way

In the fall, GSA for Safe Schools will also be bringing an exhibition from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to Madison, called "Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals: 1933-1945". This will be the first time that this exhibition has come to Wisconsin, and it will be on display at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Memorial Library from October 10th through December 10th.

GSA for Safe Schools hopes that this exhibit creates an opportunity for students to learn more about LGBT history, and will be creating educational resources about this period of history for students and teachers to use in their schools.

Our Fall GSA Conference will be held on November 14th on the UW-Madison campus, and students and school professionals who attend the conference will have an opportunity that day to visit the exhibition.

Stay tuned for more information from us, and in the mean time, you can visit the following website to learn more about the exhibition and possibly start thinking about different ways to discuss this topic with your GSA or classes:

<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/hsx/>

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 GSAFE.

3. Here Come the Proms

There are at least two LGBT-friendly proms coming up in Wisconsin. Here are the details:

MADISON: Hosted by Teens Like Us, the 2008 Pride Prom will be held again at the Lussier Family Heritage Center (3101 Lake Farm Road) on Friday, May 23rd. Doors will open at 7PM and close at 10PM. There will be food, a DJ, Prom Court and a handful of schnazzy door prizes for some safe sex savvy winners.

All Teens Like Us events are open to middle school- and high school-aged youth, and are alcohol, drug, tobacco and harassment free! A \$5 donation will be requested at the door, although no one will be turned away for inability to pay.

FOX VALLEY: Hosted by the GLBT Partnership of the Harmony Café, the 2nd Annual Gay Prom will be on Saturday, May 31st at the Liberty Banquet Hall in Kimberly, Wisconsin (800 Eisenhower Drive).

Open to youth ages 14 to 24, this formal-optional event will have prizes and a Prom Court. No alcohol, drugs, tobacco allowed (and anyone under the influence will not be allowed to enter).

4. OutReach "OutThere" Graduation Party

OutReach, Madison's LGBT Community Center, is inviting LGBTQA graduating seniors, their friends and family to attend their "OutThere" graduation party on Saturday, June 1st.

Held at 5:30PM, youth are invited to stick around after the graduation for OutReach's Queer Movie Night.

OutReach has been making strides in providing programming and social networking events for LGBTQ youth and their allies ages 18 to 24, recognizing that there is a gap in services for young people in that age bracket who are not part of a university or technical school community.

For more information about his event, contact OutReach at 608.255.8582.

5. Survey from TransYouth Family Allies

This one is for the parents and guardians out there, so please pass this information along:

TransYouth Family Allies (TYFA) is sponsoring an online survey to gather statistical information about our children and families. Your participation is confidential and anonymous. You may answer as many or as few of the questions as you are comfortable. The intention of the survey is to gather data from parents, grandparents or primary caregivers of gender variant and transgender children under the age of 18. This would include children who identify as transgender, both genders, a third gender or neither gender. We hope to include a broad section of children with gender expression that is perceived as 'different' from their assigned birth sex.

From this survey we hope to gather information regarding the prevalence of families dealing with gender expression difference, the age of onset, if any type of social or medical transition has been undertaken, etc.

One of the obstacles TYFA often faces in our educational workshops is the lack of statistics to support the work we are doing. The data gathered will enable us to publish more current and accurate information about our children and families as well as support our requests for more formal/comprehensive studies.

Please forward the survey link to families with gender 'different' children, organizations, counselors, medical practitioners, social service personnel or anyone who may come in contact with these children/families. The broader the response the more useful the data gathered will be:

<http://imatyfa.org/tyfa-intake-survey/>

Thank you so much for sharing this important project with others. TYFA hopes to publish the results in early 2009.

6. Volunteer at the “Lose the Training Wheels” Bike Camp

Are you looking for a cool volunteer opportunity this summer that will make a big difference in someone’s life? The Madison Area Down Syndrome Society (MADSS) will be hosting their second annual “Lose the Training Wheels” Bike Camp the week of July 7th through 11th this summer in Waunakee.

The Lose the Training Wheels program works with people experiencing difficulty transitioning from the use of training wheels to convention two-wheeled bicycles. The program focuses mainly on youth with varying levels of disabilities, and staff from Rainbow Trainers, Inc. will be on hand to lead the trainings.

So what would your job be? MADSS is looking for folks to be “spotters” throughout the day, lending a hand as the kids graduate onto two-wheeled bikes.

There is a minimum commitment of three 75-minute sessions throughout the week, and sessions are at 8:30AM, 10AM, 11:30AM, 1:30PM and 3PM. Volunteers must be at least 16 years of age and be willing to do a little running alongside the bikers.

For more information about this event, contact Andrea at 608.692.7653 or send an email to info@madss.org.

Still not convinced? Check out the video from this year’s bike camp: <http://storybridge.tv/chronicles/011>

7. Apply for a Plum Grant Through DoSomething.org

Do you have a great idea for a BIG project, but don’t know how you will fund it? DoSomething.org helps to support young people who want to make a difference in their communities.

One of the ways they do this is by offering grants to fund new or existing projects. Plum grants in the amount of \$500 are given out WEEKLY. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and held for three months for consideration.

For more information about how to apply and who’s eligible, visit: http://www.dosomething.org/plum_youth_grant_application

8. Scholarships Available for LGBT UW-Madison Students

Since the 1998 academic year, the GLBT Alumni Council has been awarding scholarships to undergraduate students attending or planning to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Recipients of this award demonstrate a commitment to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community, and maintain outstanding academic achievement. Each recipient also demonstrates a financial need for assistance in paying for their education at UW-Madison.

Applications are due on June 16th, and may be downloaded here:
<http://www.uwalumni.com/qlbtac>

Related Readings: News and Publications

9. Milwaukee TMJ 4: ACLU Involved in Prom Court Case

Uriel Gomez, an openly gay student at Racine Park High School, made the short list for prom queen nominees at his school this spring. At first, the school was reluctant to allow Gomez to run, but the ACLU sent a letter to Park H.S. saying that not allowing him to do so would violate federal law.

Ultimately, the school decided to keep his name on the list for prom king. For more details, follow this link:
<http://www.todaystmj4.com/news/local/18461844.html>

10. Judge: School Must Allow Pro-Gay Shirts

Last Tuesday, U.S. District Judge Richard Smoak ruled that the Holmes County, Florida school board violated a student's free speech rights when it prohibited her from wearing an LGBT-affirming t-shirt. The Ponce De Leon High School student, Heather Gillman, made several shirts in support of her openly gay ninth-grade cousin, who was suspended in September along with nine other friends for actions including shouting "gay pride" in school hallways. The ruling ordered the school board to alert each student in writing that they are allowed to express their support for gay rights in an appropriate, non-disruptive way.

To read more, follow this link: <http://www.nwfdailynews.com/article/14401>

11. ABC News: Principal Allegedly Outs Gay Students

Hollis F. Price Middle College High School Principal Daphne Beasley is facing legal action from the ACLU for allegedly outing two students when she made an announcement over the school's intercom asking for "names of all students who were couples...hetero or homo." Beasley then posted the names of two gay students in public view of teachers and students.

To learn more, check out:

<http://www.abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=4773381&page=1>
