

GSA Newsarama
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Read GSA Newsarama online at www.GSAforSafeSchools.org. Visit our website to download past issues of Newsarama 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

Wisconsin Student Wins PFLAG National Scholarship

Every year, the national organization Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) awards students across the country with scholarships in recognition of their efforts to further equality for LGBT people and their allies. This year, PFLAG National handed out scholarships to thirteen spectacular individuals, and one of those individuals hails from our great state.

Hannah Johnson of Madison West High School has been awarded the Jeanne Manford Memorial Scholarship for her significant contributions to the LGBT equality movement. In addition to being an active member of her school's GSA, Hannah has volunteered and gone door to door with Fair Wisconsin and the League of Conservation Voters. Hannah is also a member of Proud Theater, a Madison-based theatre troupe for LGBTQ students and their allies. She is on the Student Planning Council with GSA for Safe Schools, and has helped to co-present workshops at GSAFE conferences and events for two years.

The scholarship that Hannah is receiving is named for Jeanne Manford, an important figure in LGBT history: Jeanne is often credited as the woman whose actions sparked the birth of PFLAG. In 1972, after seeing her gay son being abused by police officers on the nightly news, she marched by his side in a Pride parade, carrying a sign that read "Parents of Gays: Unite in Support of Our Children". People came up to her during and after the parade, applauding her bravery, and support groups for parents and families of LGBT people began forming shortly after that. Today, it is estimated that there are more than 500 PFLAG chapters in the United States with more than 250,000 members.

Thank you for all of your amazing work, Hannah, and CONGRATULATIONS on being recognized with this scholarship. You deserve it.

To read a little bit about the other scholarship recipients, follow this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/5tpovz>

Headlines

1. Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals Exhibit

Speaking of LGBT history, in our last edition of GSA Newsarama we mentioned that GSA for Safe Schools will be bringing the traveling exhibit, "Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals: 1933-1945", to Madison from October 10th through December 10th. This exhibit, which was created by the United States Holocaust Memorial

Museum in Washington D.C., examines the ways that the Nazi regime targeted and persecuted gay men, who they viewed as threats to the “disciplined masculinity” of Germany.

GSA for Safe Schools will be working with schools and educators in the fall to arrange tours to view the exhibit. We will also be holding our fall GSA conference on the UW-Madison campus, so that students will have an opportunity to see the exhibit during the day and share their reactions to it with one another.

In addition, it is our hope that this exhibit’s presence in Wisconsin will provide an opportunity to shine a spotlight on LGBT history. What lessons can we take away from the Nazi persecution of gay men (and so many others) in the ‘30’s and ‘40’s? How can we use this information to celebrate the progress that has been made, and feel hopeful about the positive change that continues to happen?

The website for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is full of educational resources on this topic, as well as information on other groups who were persecuted by the Third Reich. To learn more, visit: www.ushmm.org.

2. Creating New Allies Project

We all know that the phrase “that’s so gay” is heard way too often. Last year, GSA for Safe Schools took a poster that was created by a middle school GSA here in Madison and turned it into a visual resource that schools all over Wisconsin can purchase to hang in their hallways. If you’re not sure what I’m talking about, check it out here: <http://www.gsaforsafeschools.org/resources.html>

This “I think I just heard you say...” poster has been wildly popular, and we’ve heard that it has been a simple yet effective tool in addressing hurtful language. That got us thinking: What other phrases would we like to see disappear from current popular slang? Could a similar poster encourage people to not say “that’s retarded”?

This summer, GSA for Safe Schools will be working on a new project called “Creating New Allies”. In addition to creating a new visual resource, this project seeks to help GSA students and students with disabilities explore ways that they can be better allies to one another at school. Students with disabilities and LGBT students often face similar obstacles: they don’t know who their allies are, they face harassment and bullying, and they often feel excluded and isolated.

If you’re near Madison and are looking for an opportunity to stay connected to the GSA movement during the summer, email Tim at tim@gsaforsafeschools.org to learn more about how you can be involved in this project.

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. Nominate Someone Today for 2008 OutReach Awards

OutReach is Madison and South Central Wisconsin's LGBT Community Center. On July 18th, they will be holding their 16th Annual Awards Banquet at the Monona Terrace in Madison. Every year, OutReach recognizes the work of local individuals to further the LGBT equality movement, handing out awards in the following seven categories: Ally of the Year, Woman of the Year, Man of the Year, Organization of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Political Courage Award and a Special Recognition Award.

Last year, our very own Brian "Mama J." Juchems received the "Man of the Year" award. Can you think of someone who deserves some recognition? If so, nominate them today at: <http://www.outreachinc.com/>

Nominations are due by June 17th.

4. Young Men's Health Summit – Registration Open

This year's Young Men's Health Summit will be taking place the weekend of July 26th and 27th. To learn more about this great learning opportunity, or to register, email Warren Scherer at wscherer@mkelgbt.org.

5. Pride Festivals in Wisconsin

It's summer, which means that Pride festivals will be held in various cities across the country. Here in Wisconsin, there are a number of Pride festivals being organized. Here are just a few:

MILWAUKEE: Pride is taking place THIS WEEKEND (June 6th, 7th, and 8th) on the lakefront (Summerfest) grounds. Warren (from Project Q) suggests that you check out the Health and Wellness area, as there will most likely be some

goodies and prizes to win. Check out www.pridefest.com to find out more details about Milwaukee Pride (including ticket prices).

GREEN BAY: "Pride Alive" will be taking place in Joannes Park (1430 Walnut St.) on July 12th from 11AM to 9PM. This FREE event will feature live entertainment, raffles and giveaways, guest speakers and tons of fun activities for all ages. Check out www.newpride.org to find out more.

MADISON: Madison Pride will be scaled back quite a bit this year. There will still be a rally and a march the weekend of July 19th and 20th, but the Magic Picnic will be put on hold until the 20th Anniversary celebration in 2009. Teens Like Us will be once again hosting a youth BBQ, and we will fill you in on the details as we get closer to July.

STEVENS POINT: Central Wisconsin Pride will be on Saturday, August 2nd in Amherst, Wisconsin, on the Portage County Fairgrounds. Details are still coming together, so keep an eye on www.centralwisconsinpride.com to find out more.

When attending Pride events, it's important to keep the following things in mind:

1. Have fun, but be safe!
2. Stay hydrated, drink lots of water, and protect yourself from the elements.
3. If protestors show up, IGNORE them. Don't give them what they want by getting into debates or shouting matches.

6. LGBT Youth and Cyberbullying – Online Survey

We included this in a couple of Newsaramas earlier this year, but I thought I would pass it along again. A research time in Iowa is conducting a study on the effects of face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying. They are asking any LGBT-identified youth who have had experiences with bullying to fill out the following online survey:

<http://tinyurl.com/5ab55w>

The survey takes about 30 minutes to complete, and all answers will remain confidential. Results of this study will be used to examine current anti-bullying policies, and to see how they can be improved to decrease the incidence of face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying.

7. 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 gender nonconforming youth and their 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 TYFA hopes 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 their educational workshops is the lack of statistics to support the work they are doing. The data gathered will enable them to publish more current and accurate information about youth and families as well as support 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.

8. 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 conventional two-wheeled bicycles. The program focuses 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 to 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 last year’s bike camp: <http://storybridge.tv/chronicles/011>

9. 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 must demonstrate a commitment to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community, and maintain outstanding academic achievement. Each recipient must also demonstrate 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/glbtag>

Related Readings: News and Publications

10. The Capital Times: Judge Upholds Constitutional Ban on Marriage

A while back we reported that a UW-Oshkosh professor, William McConkey, had filed a lawsuit that challenged the constitutional ban on gay marriage in Wisconsin, claiming that the referendum question was illegal. Wisconsin’s state constitution states that a referendum may not contain two questions, and McConkey argues that the Wisconsin amendment did just that: It asked one question about marriage, and one about civil unions. Last week, Judge Richard Niess ruled that the amendment did not violate Wisconsin’s constitution. McConkey said he plans to appeal the decision. Read more about this story here: <http://tinyurl.com/634zne>.

11. Kenosha News – Gay-Straight Club at Bradford Claims Discrimination

Last week, members of the GSA at Kenosha Bradford High School appeared before their school board and voiced their concern that the GSA was being treated unfairly at the school. Among their complaints was the fact that their club has been repeatedly denied a photograph in the school yearbook. Opinions differed on whether or not the GSA had been treated unfairly. You can read the full story here: <http://tinyurl.com/4bh9yq>.

PLEASE NOTE: As with many online news sites, readers are allowed to post their reactions and opinions below the article. Many of the comments that have been posted in response to this article could be considered offensive and/or insensitive to LGBT people and their allies. Please read with caution.

12. Twin Cities Online – Wisconsin Supreme Court Affirms Gay-Rights Foe's Suit as "Frivolous"

In 2003, Reverend Grant Storms of New Orleans was invited to speak at the "International Conference on Homo-Fascism" in Milwaukee. Action Wisconsin (now known as Fair Wisconsin), obtained a recording of that speech, in which Rev. Storms made some comments that Action Wisconsin felt advocated for the murder of gay people. Rev. Storms felt that his statements were taken out of context and that Action Wisconsin was defaming him, so he sued. Nearly five years later, the Wisconsin State Supreme Court has ruled this his lawsuit was "frivolous" and that he must pay \$87,000 in court and legal fees to Action Wisconsin. Read the full story here: <http://tinyurl.com/6rn2ll>.
