

GSA Newsarama
Volume 6, Issue 1
September 7, 2007

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

Register Your GSA or Club with GSA for Safe Schools

On behalf of the staff and board of directors at GSA for Safe Schools, welcome back to a new school year! I hope that everyone had a relaxing and reenergizing summer.

We are gearing up to send some “welcome back” packets to schools, and to help us do that we are asking students to register (or reregister!) their gay-straight alliance or club through the GSA for Safe Schools website. Every fall we try to update our list of contacts as best as possible, so any information you can share with us (current advisor, school name, name of club) is extremely helpful.

And just to make things more exciting, we’re offering a little incentive: Any group that registers through our website will be entered into a drawing to win \$50 for their GSA or club. Please note: Each club will only be entered into the drawing once, so having all thirty members of your GSA register will not increase your odds of winning.

To register, follow this link: http://www.gsaforsafeschools.org/gsa_register.html

Headlines

1. GSA for Safe Schools Walk/Run/Eat

We’ve been talking about this event for months now, and the details are finally set in stone. The GSA for Safe Schools Walk/Run/Eat will take place on Saturday, October 13th in Madison, and you can register NOW. This event is open to runners and walkers of all abilities and will feature a 1-mile walk and a 5K (3.1 mile) run. After the walk and run are over, Queen Anne’s Catering will be feeding everyone a tasty picnic-style lunch.

Early registration fees for the Walk/Run/Eat are as follows:

\$20 for Adults. \$15 for Youth (ages 12 to 17). \$10 for Children (under 12).

However, there is a team/family discount: Anyone registering as a team or family (defined simply as a group of 3 or more people registering together) will receive an additional \$5 off per person. Which would make the registration fees:

\$15 for Adults. \$10 for Youth (ages 12 to 17). \$5 for Children (under 12).

If you wait until the week of the race, however (October 6th or later), registration fees increase by \$5 per person.

We encourage GSAs and student clubs to register as a team. Be creative! Come up with a theme and attend the Walk/Run/Eat in costume. Just make sure you're wearing something you can safely walk, run, or eat in.

For those groups who are looking for an extra challenge, we are offering a fundraising incentive. Any club or group of students (registered as a team) that collectively raises \$500 in pledges will be given a \$50 gift card to the bowling alley, restaurant, craft store, movie theater (you get the idea) of their choice. If a club raises \$1,000 in pledges, they will receive TWO \$50 gift cards (to the same place or to different places).

We will be including the rules of the Fundraising Challenge in our "welcome back" packets, but if you don't want to wait for the packet, we can email the form to you right now. In order to take part in the challenge, each group must appoint one student to be the Team Captain. If you are interested in being a Team Captain for your school or club, email Tim at tim@gsaforsafeschools.org.

More information about the Walk/Run/Eat, including registration and pledge tracking forms, can be found at www.gsaforsafeschools.org.

2. Nominate an Honorary Course Marshal for the Walk/Run/Eat

When people talk about homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in schools, we often hear that gym class, locker rooms and sports teams are some of the most unwelcoming places for LGBTQ youth. Help us identify those folks who are breaking the silence and creating safer teams and playing environments for all.

Do you know a coach, gym teacher, or athletic director who has created a safe environment for LGBTQ students and athletes? Is there a student athlete at your school who has stood up to heterosexism or gender bias and is a role model for others? If so, we're looking to identify honorary course marshals for our October 13th Walk/Run/Eat. Course marshals will be stationed at various locations along the route, helping to direct runners/walkers and keeping folks motivated. It's a pretty important job.

Nominate someone today at http://www.gsaforsafeschools.org/wre_nominate_form.html

3. GSA for Safe Schools is looking for Student Planners.

GSAFE student planners are a diverse group of youth leaders from GSAs and other student clubs who are able to attend regular meetings in Madison. Past

planners have come from both Madison as well as outlying communities such as Cross Plains, Mount Horeb, Oregon, etc. Limited transportation support might be available – talk to us if interested.

As a Student Planner you will partner with GSAFE staff to plan and develop student programming (eg, conferences, rallies, etc.) that advance the priorities identified by past and current planners. Planning meetings are usually Thursday nights starting at either 4:30 or 5:00 and lasting 90 minutes. During the school year meetings are usually weekly although there are usually some weeks off between projects.

While planning programs for your peers as a Student Planner you will learn skills to become a stronger activist and work towards creating a safer climate at your school for LGBTQ youth and straight allies. You will get support around mounting a campaign, event planning or starting a GSA club on your campus.

As a student planner you will have regular opportunities to

1. Help plan and run a youth led conference or present workshops at local conferences.
1. Plan and lead trainings and workshops at local conferences and events.
2. Network with other student activists in the South Central Wisconsin region.
3. Get peer and staff support and feedback on your ongoing campaign, action or event.
4. Give input on GSAFE programs, policies and curriculum development.

In addition you may have an opportunity to

1. Discuss emerging trends in the LGBTQ and greater social justice movement.
2. Provide occasional technical assistance to other GSAs.
3. Serve as a student contact for GSAFE when the media comes calling for interviews.

Requirements

1. Willingness to commit to serving as a Student Planner for one year.
2. Committed to creating change for LGBTQ youth and fighting homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in schools.
3. Interested in developing and suggesting ideas to strengthen GSA for Safe Schools.
5. A student in a public or private middle or high school in Wisconsin.

For more info contact Tim (tim@gsaforsafeschools.org) or Brian J. (brianj@gsaforsafeschools.org) or call 608.661.4141.

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.

4. LGBT Students of Color! Speak Out!

The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) is looking for students to be part of a study about the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students of color. You can help GLSEN inform education policymakers and the public about what's really going on in our nation's schools.

If you...

- ...attend a U.S. high school,
- ...are a person of color,
- ...are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, and
- ...would like more information about participating...

...please contact Elizabeth Diaz, Research Associate, at ediaz@glsen.org or at (212)727-0135 x8051. All participants will be compensated for their time. Note: Permission from a parent or guardian is required to participate.

5. HRC's "Coming Out Day Kits" Now Available for National Coming Out Day

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is offering a free resource kit to help celebrate this year's National Coming Out Day on October 11th.

The theme for National Coming Out Day 2007 will be "Talk About It", continuing the slogan and branding that the national program has been building since 2005. National Coming Out Day is a time to celebrate openness and honesty, whether you came out 20 minutes ago, or 20 years ago. This is a time for all LGBT and straight allies to "talk about it" with friends, family and coworkers.

Coming Out Day kits include...

- ...resource guides to coming out,
- ...straight guides to GLBT Americans,
- ...transgender coming out guides,
- ...a poster, balloons, HRC stickers,

...and everything else you'll need to celebrate living openly!

To order your kit, please visit:

http://www.hrcactioncenter.org/campaign/coming_out_day_kit_standard

6. Spoken Word in the Schools Kicks Off

First Wave Spoken Word in the Schools is OMAI's (the UW-Madison Office of Multicultural Arts Initiatives) high school program in Madison. Throughout the academic year, OMAI poet-mentors lead weekly workshops at each of Madison's high schools. The spoken word clubs are a welcoming community for youth to develop their writing, share their work, and discover the power of their voice. First Wave youth poets then have the opportunity to perform at school assemblies, community events, open mics, and the annual Teen Poetry Slam. Returning as poet-mentors are Eric Mata at LaFollette and Josh Healey at West; new this year is spoken word artist and OMAI outreach coordinator Cory Sims at Memorial, and the poetic trifecta of Ali Muldrow, Lyjya Miles, and DJ Clark (all former Youth Speaks slam champs) at East High, their alma mater. Here is the schedule for this fall's workshops.

East High: Tuesdays after school with poet-mentors Ali Muldrow, Lyjya Miles, & DJ Clark & teacher-liaison Bill Gibson – Room 250; kickoff = Tuesday, Sept. 18

LaFollette High: Wednesdays after school with poet-mentor Eric Mata and teacher-liaison Andrew McCuaig – Room B35; kickoff = Wednesday, Sept. 19

Memorial High: Thursdays at lunch (both periods) with poet-mentor Cory Sims and teacher-liaison Sue Lyth – Room 614; kickoff = Thursday, Sept. 20

West High: Wednesdays at lunch with poet-mentor Josh Healey and teacher-liaison Keesia Hyzer – Room 204; kickoff = Wednesday, Sept. 19

For more information, visit <http://www.omai.wisc.edu/schools/>

7. Milwaukee LGBT Film/Video Festival September 6th through the 16th

One of Milwaukee's longest running film festivals is celebrating its 20th anniversary with an international array of the finest and newest in films and videos by and about the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. The screening-packed eleven days of features, documentaries, and shorts opens at the Oriental Theatre with the local premiere of Pratibha Parmar's "Nina's Heavenly Delights."

For ticket prices and an event schedule, check out:
<http://www4.uwm.edu/psoa/programs/film/lgbtfilm/index.html>

8. The Hear Me Project: 2007 Story Writing Contest

HEAR ME, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting positive health among youth and youth at-risk. The HEAR ME Project is a story-writing competition for youth ages 14 through 22 on HIV and other important issues. Celebrities act as final round judges and include filmmakers, authors, actors, playwrights, and scientists.

The Hear Me Project is looking for stories that are...

...up to 5 pages typed or handwritten legibly,
...about personal vulnerability to HIV/AIDS (your story can be either fiction or non-fiction; the characters in the story must be impacted by HIV/AIDS),
...original and have never been published.

The contest began on September 1st, 2007. Entries must be submitted online at www.hearmeproject.org or by mail to the following address: The HEAR ME Project, 375 Greenwich Street, 8th floor, New York, NY 10013. To be eligible, entries must be postmarked by December 1st, 2007. All components of the entry, including the entry form and essay, must be mailed in the same envelope, or submitted online at www.hearmeproject.org.

9. Tobacco Free Teens Day at the Capitol

On October 11th, Fight With Fact will be holding a half-day event at the Capitol building in Madison. The event is for youth (grades sixth through twelve) who are passionate about a smoke-free society and would like to get a little bit of practice rallying, lobbying, and learning more about how to fight Big Tobacco.

In order to register for the event, students must find an adult chaperone willing to accompany them for the day. There is no cost for attending this event.

For more information, please contact Luke Witkowski of the FACT Movement at (608) 833-0857.

10. New LGBTI Grief Support Group in Madison

HospiceCare Inc., an organization committed to enhancing the quality of life at the end of life, is offering a free support group for lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people who have lost someone through death.

The group meets for seven consecutive weeks to offer support, learn more about the grieving process and remember the lost relative, friend or partner.

Registration for the group is required. Please call Ann Schaffer at HospiceCare at (608) 327-7138 for more information.

Related Readings: News and Publications

11. GenderSAFE: New Report Shows US Schools Move Closer to Protecting Students of All Genders

The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition's 2007 GENIUS Index (Gender Equality National Index for Universities & Schools) tracks and evaluates the efforts of colleges, universities, and K-12 school districts to prohibit discrimination and promote awareness of gender identity and expression in their policies. The report analyzes and counts nondiscrimination policies, gender-neutral bathrooms, gender-neutral housing, and anti-harassment policies.

This is the second year that GenderPAC has published the GENIUS Index. The 2007 Index reflects a tremendous increase in response rate: 496 students, administrators, and alumni, representing 278 colleges and universities, responded to the survey, as compared to the 2006 Index which received 124 responses (81 schools). GenderPAC also noted an increase in the number of universities specifically banning discrimination based on gender identity or expression: 147 colleges and universities currently have such policies, as compared to 131 in 2006. More than 100 public K-12 school districts, encompassing thousands of individual schools, have extended similar protections to nearly 3.5 million children in 23 states.

For more information about this new study or to see information related to specific schools and regions, follow this link:

<http://www.gpac.org/archive/news/index.html?cmd=view&archive=news&msgnum=0682>

12. The LA Times: Young and Out on the Field

In late July, the LA Times featured a great story about increasing number of out gay athletes in the arena of high school athletics. These young athletes are challenging the stereotypes of what it means to be gay, and they're helping to change attitudes on the playing field.

To read the full article, follow this link: <http://www.latimes.com/sports/la-sp-gay28jul28,1,1775077.story?coll=la-headlines-sports&ctrack=2&cset=true>
