

GSA Newsarama
Volume 6, Issue 3
October 5th, 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.

Feature

GSA for Safe Schools Walk/Run/Eat Just One Week Away

Headlines

1. Fall Social Justice Conference – What’s It All About?
2. Become A Student Planner with GSA for Safe Schools

Related Readings: Events and Opportunities

3. Celebrate Ally Week October 14th – 20th
4. Young Queer Sports Club
5. LGBT Students of Color! Speak Out!
6. Project Q Presents Homocoming: A Queer Halloween Homecoming
7. Trick Or Treat So Others Can Eat
8. Midwest Trans Youth Conference in Ferndale, MI
9. “What If It Were You?” Poster-Making Contest
10. Seven Straight Nights for Equal Rights

Related Readings: News and Publications

11. The Daily Times: High School Club Sparks Controversy
12. Press&News: SAGE Receives Permanent Injunction

Feature

GSA for Safe Schools Walk/Run/Eat Just One Week Away

Have you signed up for the GSA for Safe Schools Walk/Run/Eat yet? It's not too late!

The numbers are growing for the Walk/Run/Eat, which will take place on Saturday, October 13th in Madison. Build your team and join us for a 1-mile walk or a 5K run. Afterwards, Queen Anne's Catering is providing everyone with a tasty picnic-style lunch.

If you'd like to put a team together, call Tim Michael at 608.661.4141: He'll tell you what you need to know.

We're still looking for a few good motivators to fill the role of course marshal for the event. If you'd rather help cheer folks on and keep them on the route than run/walk, drop Tim an email at timm@gsaforsafeschools.org.

Headlines

1. Fall Social Justice Conference – What's It All About?

Many of you have been asking us, "Hey, what's going on with the Fall GSA Conference?". Well, we finally have some answers. This fall, our conference will look a little different. We often talk about the importance of working in coalitions, so we're taking our own advice to heart and have teamed up with the Dane County Youth Leadership Conference planners to bring you the a day-long Social Justice Conference.

On Thursday, October 25th, middle school and high school students will have the opportunity to learn how ism-related violence (racism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, etc.) impacts everyone on a personal, local, and global basis. Learn strategies to better advocate for others, and in turn learn how to advocate for yourself.

The Social Justice Conference is happening during the statewide WEAC Convention, so many students in Wisconsin will have the day off. It will take place at Madison's East High School, and registration begins at 9:00 A.M. We will be sending out more detailed information soon.

2. Become a Student Planner with GSA for Safe Schools

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.

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 evenings and last about 90 minutes. During the school year meetings are usually weekly although there are often 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 movements.
2. Provide occasional technical assistance to other GSAs.
3. Serve as a student contact for GSAFE when the media come 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 GSAFE
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.

3. Celebrate Ally Week October 14th – 20th

Kick off the school year by participating in GLSEN's (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) Ally Week. The week of October 14th – 20th, middle school and high school students all across the country will be identifying and supporting Allies who are committed to addressing anti-LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) bullying and harassment in America's schools.

In 2005, members of GLSEN's Jump-Start National Student Leadership Team came up with an idea to celebrate Allies committed to ensuring safe and effective schools for all and to encourage students to take action. The idea turned into the first Ally Week celebrated in hundreds of schools nationwide in October, 2005.

For some simple (or BIG) ways to celebrate Ally Week in your school, visit <http://www.dayofsilence.org/ally.html>.

4. Young Queer Sports Club

Are you LGBT or Q?

Are you a HIGH SCHOOLER?

Have you always wanted to know what was so cool about organized sports anyways? Then we want you for Young Queer Sports Club! YQSC, created by Miles Walser and Isabel Medina (two really, really cool Madison West seniors), is an organization that seeks to provide all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (queer) youth with a safe and accepting place to explore their athleticism through group-oriented sports and activities. Our goal is to have a 10-12 week indoor soccer program this winter. No experience is necessary, but willingness to participate is essential.

If you're interested, e-mail youngqueersportsclub@yahoo.com with your full name, address, e-mail, and the best phone number to reach you at.

Check out our MySpace page at www.myspace.com/yqsc and make sure you join our Facebook group, "young queer sports club".

NOTE:

YQSC is absolutely drug, alcohol, tobacco, drama, and harassment free.

5. 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.

6. Project Q Presents Homocoming: A Queer Halloween Homecoming

Back from the grave by popular demand, Homocoming will take place on Friday, October 26th at the Miramar Theatre in Milwaukee (N. 2844 Oakland Ave).

Ticket prices: the first ½ hour it's FREE; the second ½ hour it's \$5; then it's \$10. Get there early! See performances & enjoy the costumes, food, music, fun & more. For more information about Homocoming contact Warren at 414.292.3074 or warren@projectq.org.

7. Trick Or Treat So Others Can Eat

The 6th Annual "Trick or Treat So Others Can Eat" Food Drive is underway. Brought to you by Girl Neighborhood Power of Dane County, this campaign encourages youth groups to explore different ways to sponsor a food drive in their area.

Food pantries throughout Wisconsin are experiencing huge increases in families' needs. As gas and other essentials have gotten more expensive, families with limited budgets are having a hard time making ends meet. As it gets colder, the need for food in our pantries will increase even more.

Consider sponsoring a food barrel at your school. More information on how to help out with this worthy cause can be found at www.ywcamadison.org.

8. Midwest Trans Youth Conference in Ferndale, MI

The Affirmations Community Center of Ferndale, MI is partnering with Project Q of Milwaukee to provide the first Midwest Trans Youth Conference. Through workshops, skill building, caucuses and distinguished keynote speakers, the Midwest Trans Youth Conference aims to empower youth around issues of organizing for equal access and health, all keeping with the theme, "Revolutionary Voices, Transforming Choices."

Jay Botsford of Project Q is making the arrangements for youth who would like to attend. You can contact him at jay@projectq.org or 414.223.3220 x126.



9. "What If It Were You?" Poster-Making Contest

Students from four Madison-area high schools will articulate information they wish to share with their peers, parents and the larger community in relation to HIV/AIDS by way of their words and artwork. "What if it Were You?" provides young people with an opportunity to confront misconceptions about not being at risk, and to consider what they would do if they tested positive for HIV/AIDS.

Peer education has always shown to be effective. The "What if it Were You?" contest is an imaginative and innovative form of peer education and prevention with a goal of finding an HIV prevention message that works for teens. The end result will be a message teenagers can relate to and a message that can save the lives of young people while educating our communities.

Currently, the contest is only open to students at four Madison high schools. However, the premise behind the contest could be a potential project for a GSA or club to work on. To learn more about HIVictorious and the "What If It Were You" contest, check out: www.whatifitwereyou.org

10. Seven Straight Nights for Equal Rights

Seven Straight Nights for Equal Rights (7SN) is a nationally coordinated campaign taking place in capital cities around the country, including Madison. The goal of the campaign has many dimensions, but is primarily focusing on inspiring and empowering allies to stand on the front lines for LGBT equality and transforming the LGBT rights debate into a human rights debate. Other goals include calling upon state leaders to work for LGBT Equality, redefining the term "family" as something which includes LGBT people and ending "spiritual

violence" and the use of the Bible and other spiritual texts as weapons against LGBT people.

7SN Madison will be taking place on Wednesday October 10th, at 6 P.M. on the Capitol Building Lawn. The First Lady of the State of Wisconsin, Jessica Doyle, issued a statement of support for the campaign, which has brought much national attention to Madison for this event.

For more information about 7SN Madison, visit www.SevenStraightNights.org or contact Justin Hager at justin@equalityride.org.

Related Readings: News and Publications

11. The Daily Times: High School Club Sparks Controversy

The formation of a Gay-Straight Alliance is up in the air in Farmington, New Mexico. Students at Piedra Vista High School have submitted a proposal to their administration, asking for permission to start a GSA. Supporters and opponents of the club have been very vocal. To read a more about it, visit:

http://www.daily-times.com/news/ci_6966430

12. Press&News: SAGE Receives Permanent Injunction

In contrast to the story from New Mexico, the Equal Access Act once again paved way for the formation of a Gay-Straight Alliance in Osseo, Minnesota. The club, Straights and Gays for Equality (SAGE), had been given preliminary permission to meet while the decision was being made by the courts. SAGE had repeatedly been restricted in its access to meeting spaces and use of school resources compared to other non-curricular clubs. Since the lawsuit, membership of SAGE has grown exponentially. To read the full story, check out:

<http://tinyurl.com/2o7qv7>
