

GSA Newsarama
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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 Activist Retreat – Sign Up Today

What does activism mean to you?

Where do you see racism occurring in your GSA or in the GSA movement?

Those are the questions we're asking students to ponder when they sign up for the GSA for Safe Schools Activist Retreat. The goal of this retreat is to:

1. Help you become more familiar with the ins and outs of the Wisconsin Pupil Nondiscrimination Law (118.13) so that you can use it as a tool to advocate for safe schools for all, and,
2. Have a discussion about racism and the GSA movement. Where do we notice (or not notice) it happening, and what can we do about it?

The Activist Retreat will be on Saturday, January 12th in Madison at First Baptist Church on North Franklin Avenue (off of University) from 10AM to 4PM. The cost to attend is \$5. Need-based scholarships may be available on request: all you have to do is ask.

In order to help our Student Planners put together the best retreat possible, we ask that all interested participants sign up by Friday, January 4th. Sign up online by going to www.GSAforSafeSchools.org.

Please email Tim Michael at tim@gsaforsafeschools.org or call him at (608)661-4141 if you have any questions.

 Headlines

1. GSA for Safe Schools Spring Conference – Save the Date

Mark your calendars: our big, warm and fuzzy Spring Conference will be held on Friday, March 7th this year. And by this year, I mean next year, technically: Spring 2008. We don't know many details yet, but those will start to come together in January and February.

But will there be icebreakers and performances and networking? YES!

And will there be workshops on running effective meetings and HIV prevention and how to be a super ally to transgender people? YOU BET!

And will there be students from GSAs all over Wisconsin there? SURE WILL!

Keep your eye on future Newsaramas for more information.

2. December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month

Every 31 minutes, an alcohol-related motor vehicle crash takes a person's life.

Vehicle accidents are the number one cause of death among those aged 15 to 20, so when underage drivers drink or use drugs, the results can be tragic.

It's true that December is more than half over, but EVERY month should be Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month. Here are just a few things that you and your GSA or club could do to raise awareness in your school about the dangers of self-impaired driving:

1. Set aside a GSA meeting to have a discussion on the topic of alcohol and other drugs. How do you see your peers using them? Why do you think LGBT teens have been found to use drugs and alcohol at a higher rate? What can your club do to encourage your peers to make safer, healthier choices?
2. Does your school have a S.A.D.D. (Students Against Destructive Decisions) chapter or similar club? Your GSA could collaborate with them on a poster campaign with facts, stats, and tips on getting help and staying safe.
3. Ask an expert (health teacher, school nurse, medical professional) to come and have a Q&A session with your club. Use a "question box" and have students submit their questions in writing so everything can remain anonymous.

For more resources, facts and activities you can use to commemorate National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month in your school, visit <http://www.backtoschool.drugabuse.gov/>.

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. Make Money Running Concessions at Madison Gay Hockey Games

Has your GSA taken a turn running concessions for the Madison Gay Hockey Association yet? There are only two months left in the season!

Madison Gay Hockey Association (MGHA) is the premier LGBTQA ice hockey league in Wisconsin, providing an environment free of harassment and discrimination for members and friends of the queer community to play ice

hockey and fulfill their athletic aspirations. MGHA is looking for GSAs and student clubs to run the concessions table at their games.

There are six teams in the league, and they compete in three back-to-back games every Sunday night. The games start at 6:40PM and each game lasts about 45 minutes.

So, if you and your GSA want to sell some hot chocolate and watch some hockey (while making money in the process!), call Tim at 608.661.4141 or email him at tim@gsaforsafeschools.org to get on the schedule. Once you're scheduled for a game, Tim will discuss the details with you (where to go, what to bring, etc.).

4. Winter Drag Wonderland at Harmony Café in Appleton

On Saturday, December 22nd, Harmony Café and the GLBT Partnership are hosting their "Winter Drag Wonderland" drag show. The show will feature performances by Suga Brown, Venus Love, and Raven, which will be followed by an amateur drag show and contest. Come dressed in drag and perform and be judged by the pros!

The event starts at 6PM and the drag show starts at 6:30. At 7:30, there will be a Safer Sex Q & A session, and at 8PM the amateur drag show and contest will begin.

There is a suggested \$3.00 donation to attend, and the Harmony Café is located at 124 N. Oneida Street in Appleton. Questions? Call the GLBT Partnership at (920) 734-2233 or send an email to harmonycafe@gwicc.org.

5. Celebrate New Year's Eve with Project Q in Milwaukee

Ring in the New Year early with Project Q! On Saturday, December 29th, Project Q will be celebrating in style with music, dancing, food and drink (nonalcoholic, of course!). This event is for youth ages 24 and younger.

The event will run from 6PM to 9PM at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center (315 W. Court Street, Suite 101, Milwaukee). For questions about this event, please contact Warren Scherer at wscherer@mkelgbt.org.

Related Readings: News and Publications

6. Eagle Tribune: Denied at NECC: Transgender Student Says College Discriminates

A transgender student in Massachusetts has filed an Affirmative Action complaint with Northern Essex Community College for not allowing him to use the locker room that aligns with his gender identity.

Ethan Santiago, 20, asserts that he would feel uncomfortable using the women's locker room, and school officials claim that they refused his request because they fear for his safety.

Read the full story here: <http://tinyurl.com/26zkbk>

7. NY Times: When the Bullies Turned Faceless

While many of us feel that text messaging and MySpace have made our lives easier, new technologies are paving the way for new methods of bullying. Cyberbullying has become a very real issue in our schools, sometimes with tragic results: 13 year-old Megan Meier committed suicide after months of relentless online bullying from classmates.

You can read more about Megan's story and this growing dilemma here: <http://tinyurl.com/244ce9>
