

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.

Feature

Welcome Monica Adams, GSAFE's New Middle School Program Assistant

Headlines

1. Apply for the GSA for Safe Schools Scholarship
2. Register for the Lt. Governor's Conference on LGBT Youth
3. Free Screening of the Film "Straightlaced" on March 4th in Oshkosh

Related Readings: Events and Opportunities

4. Upcoming Days of Action
5. PFLAG National Scholarship Program
6. Apply for a Point Foundation Scholarship
7. First Unitarian Society 2nd Annual LGBT Film Festival in Madison
8. Join the 2010 Dane County Youth Service Day Committee

Related Readings: News and Publications

9. Appleton Post Crescent: School Efforts Focus on Impact of What We Say
10. Dayton Daily News: Ohio Hopes to Stop Smoking by Gay Youth, Others
11. ACLU's Blog of Rights: State Legislative Round-Up: Youth and Schools and Transgender
12. USA Today – Same-Sex Couples Can Be Effective Parents, Researchers Find

Feature

Welcome Monica Adams, GSAFE’s New Middle School Program Assistant
Thanks to a three-year grant from the Queer Youth Fund, GSA for Safe Schools is thrilled to be bringing on a new staff member: Monica Adams will serve the role of our half-time Middle School Program Assistant.

In our search for this position, we were looking for someone who was bi-cultural, fluent in Spanish, and had experience working with youth. We found all of these gifts in Monica, who will be focusing on expanding our Bystanders to Allies (b2a) program in middle schools in Dane County as well as helping us with middle school GSA initiatives and GSA gatherings. Monica has studied at UW-Madison and is a graduate of the Wisconsin Apprentice Organizers Project (AOP), a program that seeks to foster a "culture of organizing" in Wisconsin.

So what does Monica have to say about herself?

“I was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where there is a large and prevalent Latino community. I was very attracted to the people, the culture, and the language as I realized there were many similarities between us. Quickly I found myself grasping the language and gaining acceptance, as I went from being viewed as Monica to ‘Mona la morena’ (dark Mona, doll). From an early age, I began to organize within the Latino community working on outwardly political issues such as immigration, to challenging subtle forms of machismo (misogyny). One of the most influential and inspirational experiences I ever had is in the Latino community where I discovered the marimacha (lesbian or tomboy) women, whom I love and respect, who discovered me long before I discovered myself.”

If you’d like to drop Monica a “hello” and “welcome”, you can email her at monicaa@gsaforsafeschools.org.

Headlines

1. Apply for the GSA for Safe Schools Scholarship

Are you a graduating senior? Have you made change?
Then you should apply for the 2010 GSAFE Youth Scholarship!

The Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE) Youth Scholarship awards four high school seniors \$1,000 each. The recipients of these awards will have demonstrated a commitment to promoting respect for all, especially in a school setting,

with an emphasis on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues. This scholarship is open to all Wisconsin high school seniors, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

Requirements for the Youth Scholarship:

- Graduating High School Senior
- Resident of Wisconsin
- Completion of application (which can be found at www.gsaforsafeschools.org)
- Two letters of recommendation, one of which must be written by a member of your school staff
- If awarded scholarship: Attendance at GSA for Safe Schools Celebration of Leadership Awards Ceremony in Madison on May 8, 2010

Application Deadline:

All applications must be received by February 22, 2010 and will be kept confidential.

Announcement: April 2009

Submission of the Scholarship Application:

Application can be submitted electronically as a Word attachment or as a hard copy that is hand-delivered, mailed or faxed to the office of: GSA for Safe Schools 301 S. Bedford Street #1 Madison, WI 53703

Application materials can be found on the “students and GSAs” page of the GSAFE website here: http://www.gsaforsafeschools.org/students_gsa.html

2. Register for the Lt. Governor’s Conference on LGBT Youth

Registration is officially open for “Engaged and Empowered: The Lieutenant Governor’s Conference on LGBT Youth.” To be held on the UW-Oshkosh campus on Friday, March 5th, this conference is open to anyone who is interested in the safety and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. Specifically, the conference will benefit educators, administrators, school counselors, social workers, healthcare professionals, parents and students.

Paul Wesselmann, experienced speaker on LGBT issues to students and teachers and owner of The Ripples Project, will keynote the conference. Participants will have the opportunity to attend workshops on topics such as preventing and addressing bullying in schools, LGBT youth experiencing homelessness, supporting transgender and gender non-conforming youth, and the intersections of race, class, sexual orientation and gender identity.

“We are excited to hold a conference with significant partners giving the unified message that it is important to understand and address LGBT youth issues,” says Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools Executive Director Cindy Crane

Registration forms can be found on the front page of the GSA for Safe Schools website at www.gsaforsafeschools.org. There is a different registration form for students and adults, and at this point we will be capping registration for high school student to three per school.

If you have questions about the Lt. Governor’s Conference, email Tim Michael at timm@gsaforsafeschools.org or call (608)661-4141.

3. Free Screening of “Straightlaced” on March 4th in Oshkosh

GSA for Safe Schools is pleased to announce a FREE public screening of “Straightlaced”, a new film from Groundspark. The screening is scheduled for Thursday, March 4th at 7:00PM at the Halsey Science Center (South Halsey Room 106) on the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh campus.

This free screening is sponsored by CESA 6, Harmony Cafe GLBT Services, Oshkosh Area School District, PFLAG-Oshkosh, UW-Oshkosh LGBTQ Resource Center, Diverse & Resilient, and Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools.

Constant pressure to act a certain way, confronting messages about body image, silencing emotions and feelings and making incorrect assumptions about peers are just some of the complex issues brought to light in “Straightlaced”.

Filmed in the same intimate styles as “That’s a Family” and “Let’s Get Real”, the heart of “Straightlaced” is candid interviews with more than 50 teens from diverse backgrounds.

“Straightlaced” is directed by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Debra Chasnoff and is the latest documentary film production from Groundspark’s highly acclaimed Respect For All Project. The film will be coupled with a student panel and discussion.

“Straightlaced”, which features unscripted high school youth from around the country speaking candidly about harmful pressures caused by rigid gender roles and homophobia is surprisingly uplifting and entertaining. From girls who dumb down so they don’t intimidate boys, to boys who are sexually active just to prove they aren’t gay, to non-conforming teens who face relentless bullying, the students in “Straightlaced” show how gender expectations are having unhealthy and often dangerous impact on the lives of today’s teens.

Go to www.groundspark.org/straightlaced for more information on this great film.

For more information on the Lt. Governor's Conference on LGBT Youth go to www.gsaforsafeschools.org and download a registration flier.

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.

4. Upcoming Days of Action

The spring semester is almost upon us, which can be a really busy time for GSAs and other student clubs. Each month, there is a different "day of action" that students can organize in their school. Here is a brief overview:

FEBRUARY

TransAction! – February 26th, 2010

The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, in collaboration with other national partners, has introduced a new day of action: TransAction Day. This is a day for education and celebration of transgender and gender non-conforming people and experiences; a day to begin having dialogues about gender and to advocate for inclusive schools for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

For great TransAction! resources, visit: <http://www.dayofsilence.org/transaction.html>

MARCH

Wisconsin LGBT Day of History – March 2nd

Did you know that Wisconsin was the first state in the country to pass a law banning discrimination against LGB people? Republican Governor Lee Dreyfus signed the bill into law on March 2nd, 1983. For that reason, GSA for Safe Schools encourages GSAs and schools to organize events at the beginning of March to shine a spotlight on LGBT history.

To learn more about LGBT history in Wisconsin and the United States, visit: www.gsaforsafeschools.org/lgbt_history.html

APRIL

★ Day of Silence – April 16th, 2010

The Day of Silence is a student-led day of action on which those who support making anti-LGBT bias unacceptable in schools take a day-long vow of silence to recognize and protest the discrimination and harassment -- in effect, the silencing -- experienced by LGBT students and their allies. Day of Silence has been around for more than ten years, and has become one of the largest student-lead days of action in the country.

Many great ideas on how you can organize a Day of Silence (or something similar) in your school can found at www.dayofsilence.org. You can also download an informational sheet of frequently asked questions about the Day of Silence (great for school administrators!) on the resources page of the GSA for Safe Schools website at www.gsaforsafeschools.org.

For a list of these days of action and more, download the "Ready-Made Events" document on the resources page of GSA for Safe Schools' website.

5. PFLAG National Scholarship Program

PFLAG National (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) scholarships are now available! Scholarship levels range from \$1,000 to \$5,000, with numerous recipients at each level.

To be eligible, one must:

- Be a graduating senior entering higher education for the first time in 2010
- Self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or a straight ally
- Demonstrate an interest in service to the LGBT community
- Have applied to an accredited higher education institution

Applicants will need to submit the following:

- A complete application form
- A one-page essay
- A high school transcript
- One letter of reference
- A completed release form

Send your application materials in one packet to:

PFLAG National

1726 M St. NW, Ste. 400
Washington, D.C. 20036

You may also submit your application and essay online. To learn more about the PFLAG National Scholarships, or to apply online, visit: www.pflag.org.

Application deadline is March 12, 2010.

6. Point Foundation Scholarship Available

Point Foundation is the nation's largest scholarship-granting organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students of merit. Individuals enrolled in either an undergraduate or graduate program, beginning or continuing in the fall of 2010, are eligible to apply.

Point Foundation (Point) provides financial support through multi-year scholarships, leadership training, mentoring and hope to LGBTQ students who are marginalized because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. The organization provides its scholars with the financial ability to attend the nation's foremost higher educational institutions and its donors and mentors with the rare satisfaction of directly investing their resources and time in future generations of leaders.

Point Foundation believes in enabling these individuals who endure the daily harassment and abandonment of family, friends, educational institutions and communities with the opportunity of higher education. Through Point's scholarship, the organization empowers its scholars and gives them the support and encouragement to excel both academically and personally.

Who qualifies for a Point Scholarship?

Applicants should visit Point's website to review current Point Scholars' biographies and assess the type of scholars that are generally selected. Applicants do not need straight A's to apply, yet Point is looking for individuals who have proven leadership skills, excellent scholastic achievements, and want to make a difference in the world. All applicants are evaluated on the totality of their situation including academic accomplishments, financial, leadership within extra-curricular and career-related activities, personal circumstances and goals for the future.

To learn more or to apply, visit <http://www.pointfoundation.org/scholarships.html>

7. First Unitarian Society 2nd Annual LGBT Film Festival in Madison

You are invited to First Unitarian Society's (FUS) 2nd Annual LGBT Film Festival, to be held on Saturday, February 6th in their Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Landmark Auditorium at 900 University Bay Drive in Madison .

At 1:00PM, see "Ruthie and Connie: Every Room in the House", an intimate 2002 documentary about a deep friendship that turns to love between two Jewish grandmothers in the early 1970's. At 7:00PM, experience "Amancio: Two Faces on a Tombstone", a 2009 documentary about the 2005 murder of a gay Latino female impersonator in Yuma, Arizona.

Discussions will follow each film, and refreshments will be available.

These free screenings are presented by First Unitarian Society's LGBT Welcoming Congregation Committee and is co-sponsored with PFLAG and Q-Cinema International, a program of OutReach.

Contact FUS at 608.233.9774 or check <http://www.fusmadison.org/sj/WelcomingCongregation.shtml> for more information.

8. Join the 2010 Dane County Youth Service Day Committee

Calling Youth Looking to Make a Difference in Dane County! Recruitment has started for the 2010 Youth Service Day Committee. Youth on this committee plan and coordinate Global Youth Service Day, a full weekend of youth-led volunteer projects to promote service learning and year-long volunteer activity.

Members serving on this committee:

- Create promotional materials to publicize activities such as posters, advertisements, and a professional TV commercial with Charter Communications!
- Communicate with local, state and federal elected officials to promote and participate in Youth Service Day activities.
- Contact agencies and potential participants to assist with project coordination.
- Coordinate, plan, and staff YSD celebration.
- Serve as community contacts with interested youth and youth groups.

This group is open to all middle and high school-aged youth. Meetings will be held Tuesday nights, 5:30-7:00, January 26th-April 20th. Youth Service Day will be held April 23-25th.

For more information and a volunteer interest form please contact Nicholas Wagner, United Way of Dane County Volunteer Coordinator, nwagner@uwdc.org or 246-5487.

Dane County's 2010 Global Youth Service Day is a partnership of United Way of Dane County, Urban League of Greater Madison, the Dane County Youth Commission, and Youth Service America; with sponsorship from State Farm and Charter Communications.

Related Readings: News and Publications

9. Appleton Post Crescent: School Efforts Focus on Impact of What We Say

Last week we reported on the “Words Hurt” campaign organized by students at Appleton East High School. The event was a smashing success, and even caught the attention of some local media. And at Appleton West, the school has been focusing on increasing the usage of phrases like “please” and “I’m sorry.”

Read more about both of these stories here: <http://tinyurl.com/yae8ppb>

10. Dayton Daily News: Ohio Hopes to Stop Smoking by Gay Youth, Others

According to the Centers for Disease Control, LGBT youth smoke and use other tobacco products at a rate 60% higher than their heterosexual peers and cisgender peers. In an effort to address this disparity, the state of Ohio has launched a new program called “Butt Out Ohio” that seeks to educate LGBT youth about the health risks associated with smoking and offer resources to help them quit.

Read more here: <http://tinyurl.com/y9za2mw>

A similar program called “rm2breathe” exists in Wisconsin. You can read more about that program here: <http://www.rm2breathe.org/>

11. ACLU's Blog of Rights: State Legislative Round-Up: Youth and Schools and Transgender

A lot happened in 2009. In some areas, advances were made for LGBT Equality: The Federal Hate Crimes Act passed into law, the Obama administration added gender identity/expression to its list of protected classes for federal employees, and marriage equality was achieved in Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire and Washington D.C. Some setbacks also occurred: Maine lost marriage equality, and the Defense of Marriage Act and Don't Ask Don't Tell failed to be repealed.

An awful lot happened in relation to LGBT youth in schools, too. To read the ACLU's 2009 "round-up", click here: <http://tinyurl.com/ykh4tup>

12. USA Today – Same-Sex Couples Can Be Effective Parents, Researchers Find

A new study conducted by the University of Southern California indicates that children raised by same-sex parents are statistically indistinguishable from children raised by opposite-sex parents in terms of self-esteem, social adjustment and school performance.

To read more about this study and some of its critiques, follow this link: <http://tinyurl.com/yh9r7an>
