

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

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

The evening before the conference, there will be a free community screening of Straightlaced, an award-winning film by Groundspark that takes a look at how societal pressures around gender and sexuality confine American teens. Featuring interviews from more than 50 young people, the film demonstrates how gender role expectations and homophobia are interwoven, and illustrates the different ways that these expectations connect with culture, race, and class.

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 tim@gsaforsafeschools.org or call (608)661-4141.

Headlines

1. Donate Your Facebook Status to the Wisconsin School Climate Survey

We’re so close! We’ve almost reached our goal of getting 200 students to fill out the Wisconsin School Climate Survey. A big THANK YOU to everyone who has already filled out the survey and to the schools that have clearly made a concerted effort to get a lot of students to fill it out (you know who you are!).

Are you a Facebook user? Will you let us borrow your status update for a few hours to help spread the word about the survey?

Here's how it will work:

1. If you haven't already done so, PLEASE fill out the survey yourself at <http://tinyurl.com/wischoolclimatesurvey09>
2. Log onto Facebook and change your status to this: "I just filled out the Wisconsin School Climate Survey and think you should too! Are you a middle school or high school student in Wisconsin who wants schools to be safe for LGBT students and their allies? Fill out the survey today at <http://tinyurl.com/wischoolclimatesurvey09> and then copy and paste this as your status. It only takes 20 minutes!"
3. Watch as your Facebook friends jump on the bandwagon and fill out the survey themselves!

The survey is completely anonymous and takes between 20 and 30 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions about anti-LGBT language you hear at school, experiences you've had with harassment and bullying, whether or not LGBT issues are taught in the classroom at your school, and where you go to find support.

We know that the survey is a little long, but the information we're gathering will be extremely helpful in approaching administrators and decision makers in advocating for more inclusive school policies and curricula. Please don't start it unless you have time to finish it – we can't use information gathered from incomplete surveys.

Please fill out the survey today at: <http://tinyurl.com/wischoolclimatesurvey09>

If you have any questions about the Wisconsin School Climate Survey, send an email to Brian J. at brianj@gsaforsafeschools.org or Tim at tim@gsaforsafeschools.org.

2. Are You a Fan of GSA for Safe Schools?

And hey, while you're on Facebook, why don't you become a fan of GSAFE? We would love to reach 1,000 fans on our page, and we're about halfway there.

As a fan, you'll be able to get more regular mini-updates from GSAFE right in your News Feed. Don't worry though – we won't clog your stream.

You can become a fan of GSAFE a number of different ways: You can do a search for “Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools” in the upper right-hand search box, or you can follow this ridiculously long link and sign in:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Gay-Straight-Alliance-for-Safe-Schools-GSAFE/102403836648?filter=2>

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. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Organizing Week

January may feel like a long ways off, but it will be here before we know it. Have you ever wanted to work with other clubs in your school, but don't know quite how to go about it? Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Organizing Week is a great opportunity to reach out to other groups and work on a combined project.

In the spirit of one of the world's greatest leaders, GLSEN is proud to support Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Organizing Week from January 19th through 22nd, 2010! During this week, organizers will work to build connections across multiple groups, communities and issues and grow their advocacy through coalition building.

This week of action encourages students working in the safe schools movement together with other social justice work to recognize the importance of collaborating with others as a tool for social change. By connecting across multiple issues, identities, groups, communities, and experiences we strengthen the movement for social justice comprised of people of different races, ethnicities, abilities, religious beliefs and age.

To learn more about coalition building and to download “8 Things to Do for MLK”, visit <http://www.dayofsilence.org/mlk.html>.

4. Volunteer for the MBLGTACC

I'm sending a message out for a great opportunity to help with MBLGTACC, the Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference!

I'm Sky Belcourt, your Volunteer Chair and overall organizer! This year for MBLGTACC we're going to need a lot of volunteers to make this huge conference happen. I'm sending out requests for people to volunteer to help throughout the year as well as the weekend of the conference, the weekend of February 19th.

There will be multiple opportunities throughout the year for volunteers to work on various tasks that we'll need help on, as well as committees that will need (wo)manpower to sail this big gay ship smoothly. Additionally, we will need a LOT of people working the weekend of the event. As an extra incentive, those who are working will have their registration fee waived, so it's a great idea to help out!

If you're interested in joining our legion of volunteers, send me an email at Volunteer.mblgtacc@gmail.com to be added to the listserv so you'll be in the know with how to get involved.

Remember, this is a GREAT resume builder! And if you work the weekend of the conference, you'll have a waived registration fee (\$70!!)

And PLEASE send an email to Volunteer.MBLGTACC@gmail.com if you'd like to have E-Mail reminders sent out to you! Especially if you do not check Facebook that often. :)

We're also looking for people to serve on various committees, such as Programming (Deciding what programs and workshops will happen), Publication (Making the booklet for the conference), as well as a few others, e-mail me/Message me for more info!

Official Website: <http://lgbt.wisc.edu/mblgtacc/>

Volunteer Facebook Group:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=142889913339#/group.php?gid=142889913339&ref=ts>

5. 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>

6. GLSEN National Announces New Safe Space Kit

Designed to help educators create a safe space for LGBT youth in schools, the NEW Safe Space Kit features the Guide to Being an Ally to LGBT Students. This guide provides concrete strategies for supporting LGBT students, educating about anti-LGBT bias and advocating for changes in your school.

A free version of the Safe Space Kit can be downloaded on GLSEN's website at <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/1641.html>.

You can also purchase a full-color version of the Safe Space Kit from the GLSEN Store at <http://www.glsenstore.org/educators.html>.

Related Readings: News and Publications

7. ACLU Blog – A Gleeful Thought About School Clubs

Whether you're a fan of "Glee" or not, you have to admit that it's certainly caught America's attention. And for that reason, the ACLU is pleased that they have been mentioned twice on the show, once in reference to an after-school club being treated differently than another. Sound familiar? For a great refresher on the Equal Access Act and the ACLU's thoughts on "Glee", visit their blog here:

<http://tinyurl.com/y8l3khs>

8. MSNBC – Transgender Teen: McDonald’s Discriminates

A transgender teenager is claiming that a Florida McDonald’s discriminated against her by refusing to interview her for a job. On top of that, she says that an employee used an anti-LGBT slur towards her in a voicemail message.

Read the full story here: <http://tinyurl.com/yjdnv74>

9. Washington Post – D.C. Council Approves Same-Sex Marriage Bill

After months of debate, D.C. council members voted 11-2 to pass a bill that would allow same-sex couples to marry in our nation’s capital. The bill still has to jump through a few more hoops, but D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty has pledged to sign it when it hits his desk.

Read the full story here: <http://tinyurl.com/ybhfp4p>

10. Pink News – Gene Discovery Could Make Gender Reassignment Easier

Researchers at the National Association for Medical Research have pinpointed a gene that single-handedly prevents females from developing male-bodied characteristics. When “switched off”, the gonads of lab mice began changing from ovaries into testicles and began producing higher levels of testosterone. With time and further study, this kind of gene therapy could make it easier for FtM transsexuals to physically transition.

Read more about this breakthrough here: <http://tinyurl.com/ydbsl7h>
