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Students learn from GSA conference

A group of La Quinta High School students participated in a leadership conference aimed at bringing together students from Gay-Straight Alliance clubs throughout the Coachella Valley.

La Quinta High students were among 38 valley teens who attended the Oct. 24 conference, hosted by the College of the Desert Gay-Straight Alliance and the Palm Springs chapter of Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

Other attendees, who hailed from Cathedral City, Desert Hot Springs and Desert Mirage high schools and College of the Desert, attended several workshops led by two youth trainers from Los Angeles and Coachella Valley.

The topics discussed ranged from race to gender identity to diversifying the students' Gay-Straight Alliance clubs and starting campaigns to combat intolerance.

?The GSA Leadership Summit is designed to support the (alliances) already existing in the Coachella Valley as well as help students start new clubs in middle and high school,? Southern California GSA Program Coordinator Daniel Solis said.

?Research has proven that having a GSA club in a school plays a critical role in making lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students feel safe and feel like a part of the larger school community. GSA Network and PFLAG remain committed to supporting GSAs in the Coachella Valley and making all schools safe for all students to learn.?

Senior Tyler Beltran, vice president of the La Quinta High School GSA, said the conference was a worthwhile experience.

?The main reason we hold this leadership summit,? she said, ?is essentially just to teach GSA officers how to have an outrageous club."

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News Article
http://www.mydesert.com/article/20091119/NEWS04/911180369/10... [1]
The Desert Sun, Palm Springs, CA
Michael Guagliardo, Special to The La Quinta Sun

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