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GSA Protest in Perris

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You shouldn?t have to cross a picket line to attend school.

But that?s exactly what happened to students at Tomas Rivera Middle School in rural Perris, California when they tried to start a Gay-Straight Alliance at their conservative school.

In January, five very brave 8th graders and their school counselor approached GSA Network for help forming a GSA. We traveled to Perris to meet with them. We shared our resources, including detailed information on their legal rights. With our training, they successfully convinced administrators to approve the GSA.

But that didn?t stop some parents in this small, conservative town from **trying to ban the GSA**. They began picketing the school, demanding that administrators revoke the club?s approval. They targeted not only students, but also teachers who supported the GSA, even calling one a ?lesbian pedophile.?

We were outraged. Immediately we organized a counter-protest to let students and teachers at Tomas Rivera know they were not alone. We partnered with progressive parents as well as local LGBT organizations. The picketers were no match for our coalition. We easily outnumbered them 5 to 1. After a week, they gave up. Now the GSA is thriving.

Students in Perris stood up to hatred. With your support, we can continue to take quick action when LGBT students are threatened.

This November, GSA Network will host a GSA Leadership Summit in the Temecula Valley where Perris is located to provide resources and training to all of the GSA clubs in the area. It?s one of 13 regional summits we?ll be holding in Southern California this school year to train and empower students in isolated places like Perris.

Will you show GSA activists in small towns like Perris that you have their backs? Please make a gift today to support GSA youth standing up for safer schools.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Laub
Executive Director

P.S. Please give $50 or $100 by Oct. 31st to support the GSA Leadership Summit. Donate now.[1]

[1]

Students fight to have GSA

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[1] http://www.gsanetwork.org/donate