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GSA Network Executive Director Honored with Irvine Leadership Award

Sacramento ?Carolyn Laub, the Founder and Executive Director of Gay-Straight Alliance Network, will receive one of five 2012 James Irvine Foundation Leadership Awards today in recognition of the innovative solution GSA Network offers young people fighting homophobia and transphobia in California schools. Founded in 1998, GSA Network is a national youth leadership organization that empowers lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and straight ally youth to form and run Gay-Straight Alliance clubs that focus on making schools safer and more welcoming places for all students.

?I am honored to receive this award and grateful that the Irvine Foundation has recognized both the seriousness of the problem that bullying against LGBT youth poses in California and the power of youth leadership to make it better,? said Carolyn Laub. ?I am proud to see GSA Network?s approach, where young people themselves lead the movement to create safer schools, distinguished as a model solution for others invested in youth to follow.?

Laub?s award will be presented by Tom Torlakson, the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Awards, which aim to spotlight model solutions that could better the lives of more Californians if replicated by policymakers and others, include $125,000 in support for each recipient?s organization.

?Starting school, I knew that I was someone who was different, and I was bullied and ostracized by my peers, my family, and my friends,? said Benji Delgadillo, a member of the GSA Network Board of Directors and President of the San Juan Hills High School Gay-Straight Alliance club.

?GSA Network taught me that I have the power to stand up and fight, not only for myself, but for all LGBT students.?

In California alone, GSA Network has brought GSA clubs to 56% of public high schools, impacting more than 1.1 million students at 870 schools. GSA Network's youth advocates have played a key role in changing laws and policies that impact youth in schools. GSA Network also operates the National Association of GSA Networks, which unites 35 statewide networks of GSA clubs throughout the country.

?In difficult times, we must not lose sight of the creative solutions and transformative results that Californians are achieving on some of our most significant problems,? said Jim Canales, president and CEO of the Irvine Foundation. ?We want to shine a spotlight on these inspiring leaders, and we want to encourage others to help grow and replicate their successful models for an even greater impact on our state.?

To learn more about GSA Network, visit www.gsanetwork.org [2] or www.irvine.org/leadership [3] to view a video about GSA Network?s award-winning model:

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Press Release
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