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FRESNO, March 23, 2012 – On Saturday, young people from across the Central Valley will join together for an annual youth-led conference for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) and straight ally youth working to create safer schools for all students. Through workshops, a resource fair, and a keynote speech, the 2012 Expression Not Suppression conference, hosted by Gay-Straight Alliance Network and Community Link, will build students' and adult allies' skills to stop bullying and harassment at school based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

WHAT: 8th Annual Expression Not Suppression (ENS) conference for LGBTQ youth & allies
WHEN: Saturday, March 24, 9am-7pm, followed by a youth-only dance.
WHERE: The Big Red Church, 2131 North Van Ness Blvd., Fresno

"Youth in Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs throughout the Central Valley are determined to make their campuses safe for all students, including the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth who currently face harassment and discrimination at their schools," said Victoria Benevides, Gay-Straight Alliance Network's Central Valley Program Coordinator. "Expression Not Suppression offers these youth a supportive space to learn about their rights, gain skills, and become strong leaders in their schools and communities."

Yosimar Reyes, a two-spirit poet and activist who speaks to issues affecting queer immigrant youth, will keynote the event. Workshops, several of which will be led by youth themselves, will include discussions about bullying, starting a Gay-Straight Alliance club, and students' legal rights.

"I got involved in Gay-Straight Alliance work because I have the right to be free from bullying and harassment, and I want other Central Valley students to know that they, too, can make their schools safer and more accepting places for everyone," said Brianna Navarro, a sophomore at

Clovis East High School in Clovis and one of the youth organizers of the conference. “At Expression Not Suppression, we have created a support system to empower all Central Valley youth with the tools and information they need to not only protect themselves, but to change their communities.”

For more information, visit www.gsanetwork.org/ens [1].

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Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA Network) is a national youth leadership organization that empowers youth activists to fight homophobia and transphobia in schools by training student leaders and supporting student-led Gay-Straight Alliance clubs throughout the country. 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 at the local and state level. GSA Network operates the National Association of GSA Networks, which unites more than 30 statewide networks of GSA clubs throughout the country. GSA Network is also the founder of the Make It Better Project, which aims to stop bullying and prevent suicide.

http://www.gsanetwork.org [2]
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