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# Expression Not Suppression 2012

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**?But it is undeniable**
**That the queer spirit is resilient?**

Sharing those words and more from his immigrant, working class, queer perspective, poet and ENS keynote speaker Yosimar Reyes [1] kicked off an unforgettable Expression Not Suppression conference in California?s Central Valley. Over 120 people and 18 local organizations gathered for this day of learning, activism, and yes, resilience, fueled by Reyes?s call for youth to be at the center of community activism.

GSA members and youth leaders traveled from Stanislaus County, Tulare-Kings County, and Fresno County to participate and learn from each other at the Fresno conference. ?People of all types and ages were present at ENS 2012,? said Brianna Navarro, a Central Valley youth leader and one of the conference organizers. ?Some lived nearby while others drove quite a distance to be with us, but all of them came with a cheerful disposition and great enthusiasm for making positive change in their schools.?

As the day progressed, youth eagerly chose between 19 different workshops, including GSA Network?s Beyond the Gender Binary, an Out In The Silence film screening, and Coming Out 101. Adult allies in attendance also had the opportunity to network and participate in workshops hosted by the California Rural Legal Assistance targeted at helping them become more informed allies. Between workshops, youth and adult allies explored the resource fair, which featured organizations like Community Link [2] (an event co-host), The Trevor Project [3], My Lgbt Plus [4], and Barrios Unidos [5]. Closing this youth conference with a fun opportunity to express and not suppress yourself, LGBTQ and allied youth danced the night away to music and a drag show.

?ENS was an experience that I will not forget,? said Christian Capulin, a conference organizer and a youth trainer who led three workshops at the event. ?Even as a trainer, I learned things that could help strengthen my school?s GSA. I was proud to be involved because I felt that I taught youth like myself skills that they could implement to make their GSA stronger.?

GSA Network is proud that ENS 2012 successfully created a safe space that allowed students to come together to explore the multiple oppressions faced by youth and enabled teachers to become advocates for and form partnerships with LGBTQ and straight allied youth. ENS 2012 was a hit, equipping our communities with the tools needed to change the world! And our ENS youth planning team members, like Brianna and Christian, encourage you all to live every day expressing yourself and not suppressing yourself as we fight homophobia and transphobia in our schools and communities.

*To read Yosimar Reyes?s full keynote speech, please [visit his tumblr](http://yosimar.tumblr.com/post/19939409642/cuentos-that-i-carry-in-my-skin-by-yosimar-reyes) [1]. It?s worth it!*

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**Links:**
[1] http://yosimar.tumblr.com/post/19939409642/cuentos-that-i-carry-in-my-skin-by-yosimar-reyes
[2] http://www.fresnorainbowpride.com/newsite/index.html
[3] http://www.thetrevorproject.org/
[4] http://mylgbtplus.com/

[5] http://www.fresnobarriosunidos.org/