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Gathering to Advance National Gay-Straight Alliance Movement

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Youth Activists from 25 States Gather in Louisville, KY to Advance National Gay-Straight Alliance Movement

The 7th annual National Gathering of Gay-Straight Alliance Networks will focus on ending bullying and creating safe schools for all students

Louisville, KY – On Thursday, August 2nd, over 70 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) and ally youth and organizers from 25 states will meet in Louisville, Kentucky for a four-day gathering of the nation's statewide networks of Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs. Youth activists and organizers from across the country will share knowledge, skills, stories, and ideas from their experience advocating for safer schools.

"Just one Gay-Straight Alliance club in one California high school completely changed my life – and every year, other youth experience that same transformation in countless GSA clubs across the country," said Brianna Navarro, a high school junior who helped plan the Gathering with the National Association of GSA Networks. "That's why GSA youth activists are coming together in Louisville to build the tools and knowledge that will fuel the national GSA movement, which helps lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and ally youth in this country make schools safer."

Gay-Straight Alliance clubs are student-led groups in middle schools and high schools that support LGBT youth and work to create safer schools for all students.

"Working on everything from supporting fellow students to establishing anti-bullying policies to ending harsh and punitive school discipline, the young people at National Gathering are proof of

the power of youth organizing to change schools, states, and the country," said Carolyn Laub, Founder and Executive Director of Gay-Straight Alliance Network, which runs the National Association of GSA Networks.

Founded by Gay-Straight Alliance Network in 2005, the National Association of GSA Networks facilitates skills-sharing and joint initiatives between statewide organizations that network Gay-Straight Alliance clubs and train youth leaders. The National Gathering features a plenary, workshops, panels, and discussion groups focused on building the national GSA movement.

"Since 1990, the youth of Louisville have been engaged in vital, important and courageous work throughout Kentuckiana schools. As a model of how small-medium cities in conservative areas can bring about change for LGBTQ youth, we're thrilled to host students and youth workers from all over the country to celebrate youth empowerment and plan the next steps for the national GSA movement," said Donald Taylor, Jr. Executive Director of Louisville Youth Group, a National Association member and host organization for this year's National Gathering.

This year's National Gathering was made possible, in part, by the generous support of Humana and the Tides Foundation, at the recommendation of Mr. Weston Milliken.

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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 880 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 37 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.www.gsanetwork.org[1]

Louisville Youth Group (LYG) is a community grassroots organization that helps and supports young people by providing resources and a safe social atmosphere for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning (GLBTQ) and supporting young people under 21 throughout the Kentuckiana Region. Founded in 1990, LYG collaborates with community organizations and youth service providers in training and resource development. We envision a Louisville and Kentuckiana that accepts, affirms and uplifts all young people, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

http://gsanetwork.org [2]

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