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Transgender Day of Remembrance

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Transgender Day of Remembrance is a day that we set aside every November 20th to pay respect to those who have passed in the transgender community. On this day, we take a moment to remember victims of hate and prejudice against those who identify as a gender other than the one assigned at birth. It began in 1998 with the murder of one beautiful transgender woman, Rita Hester, who never saw justice and inspired a candlelight vigil of 250 people. Since then, it has grown each year becoming a nationwide event for the entire LGBTQ community.

Although this day is set aside to remember, we also need to look around and realize that violence and discrimination are still prominent. Transgender people often face bullying, slurs, misgendering, and financial problems due to discrimination in the work place or the cost of transitioning. Trans people, and particularly trans women of color, face disproportionately high rates of violence.

This day can bring feelings of sadness, anger, and sometimes even fear, as we remember not only our trans brothers and sisters, but society's brutality against people for simply expressing

themselves and pursuing happiness. But many in the LGBTQ community view this day with hope -- hope that our actions will create change and encourage acceptance. We look toward a brighter future where all are educated and united against ignorance and intolerance. For me, this day elicits confusion, sadness, and determination. I find myself unable to grasp the concept that people are cast out of society for simply being true to themselves, saddened by the oppression and violence, and determined to bring justice to this beautiful community and their loved ones.

And so, take time on this Transgender Day of Remembrance to honor those who have passed, spread awareness for their struggles today, and work toward a better future.

The photo above was taken by Owen Aptekar-Cassels, a GSA Network youth leader who published this post last week[1] on how to honor Transgender Day of Remembrance.

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Links:
[1] http://www.gsanetwork.org/news/blog/3-ways-gsas-honor-transgender-day-remembrance/11/14/12