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Gay-Straight Alliance Network hosts 8th annual Youth Empowerment Summit
on Saturday, December 15, 2012

San Francisco -- The 8th annual Youth Empowerment Summit (YES), hosted by Gay-Straight Alliance Network and planned and led by youth, will bring hundreds of California high school and middle school students to San Francisco on December 15, 2012. Aimed at making schools safer for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth, the summit will include skills-building workshops, a resource fair, and a keynote youth panel to discuss the impact of the school-to-prison pipeline on LGBT young people. LGBT youth are 1.4 times as likely to be expelled from school as their straight peers.

What: 2012 Youth Empowerment Summit
When: Saturday, December 15th, 2011, 9am-5pm (followed by a youth dance party)

- 10am: Keynote youth panel on LGBT youth and the school-to-prison pipeline
- 10:45am: Photo-op, media opportunities

Where: Mission High School, 3750 18th Street, San Francisco, CA

"Like many LGBT youth, I've faced slurs and bullying from my peers and then punishment from my administrators for acting out against that harassment. I got involved with my Gay-Straight Alliance club because I had to make my school a safer space if I was going to succeed," said Rexy Amaral, a sophomore at Mission High School in San Francisco, CA. "I helped plan today's conference to empower other young people to find their voices, transform their communities, and strengthen the GSA movement."

The 2012 Youth Empowerment Summit will offer 45 workshops, including: "LGBTQ Students: Know Your Rights;" "Opening the Locker Room Closet;" and "Coming Out Against Push Out." The keynote panel will feature youth voices discussing the school-to-prison pipeline, a set of policies and practices used by school districts that indirectly push out or exclude youth of color, LGBT youth, low-income youth, and youth with disabilities. Last year's Youth Empowerment Summit drew more than 500 participants.

"Youth from across the state have seen the devastating effects of a school system that educates some students while punishing others for how they dress, act, or look," said Carolyn Laub, Founder and Executive Director of Gay-Straight Alliance Network. "That's why hundreds of LGBT and straight ally youth are coming to the 2012 Youth Empowerment Summit, where they can find the tools they need to organize their Gay-Straight Alliance clubs to advocate for safer schools for all youth struggling against oppression and discrimination."

The 2012 Youth Empowerment Summit is supported by community co-sponsors Genentech, PG&E, the Rainbow Community Center, and PFLAG San Francisco. Volunteers from PricewaterhouseCoopers, Google, the Gap, and the University of San Francisco LGBT Caucus also help make the summit possible.

Note to Journalists:

- Media opportunity / interviews / photos at 10:45 am
- Keynote youth panel at 10 am
- Interviews with youth available in English and Spanish

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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 890 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.

http://gsanetwork.org [2]
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