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Feb. 6, 2013

San Francisco, CA - On February 6, GSA Network joins lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and straight ally (LGBTA) students, adults and organizations across America to celebrate the second National Gay-Straight Alliance Day. A project of Iowa Pride Network (IPN), the day is meant to strengthen the bond between LGBT people and straight allies, and in particular recognize and honor student organizations called Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs). These student-led groups work to educate their peers to stop homophobia and transphobia in schools and colleges.

Last year, twenty-one states and eight national organizations took part in the day-long celebration. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan also released a two-minute YouTube video supporting GSAs, stating, “Gay-Straight Alliances and similar student groups play an important role in creating welcoming, affirming, and respectful schools and colleges – safe places where learning can happen and students flourish. This work is absolutely essential. GSAs are a proven tool for creating welcoming school climates and helping students stay in school.”

In its second year, National GSA Day is set to expand to thirty-seven states and a dozen national partners have signed on to help spread the work about the important role these groups play in keeping schools and colleges safe and students feeling connected. Student organizations are asked to do three things during the day: Be visible, show appreciation and plan for the future.

Research has shown GSAs can provide a safe and affirming space for LGBT students and contribute to creating a more welcoming school environment. According to the 2011 GLSEN National School Climate Survey:

- LGBT students in schools with a GSA heard fewer homophobic remarks than students in schools without GSAs.
- LGBT students were more likely to report school personnel intervened when hearing homophobic remarks.
- LGBT students were more likely to experience less victimization related to their sexual

orientation and gender expression.
- LGBT students were less likely to feel unsafe because of their sexual orientation; and had a greater sense of connectedness to their school community than students without a GSA.

During National GSA Day there will also be a live “Tweet Chat” at 3 p.m. Pacific Time where young people from across the country can join the conversation by tweeting their thoughts and questions using the hash tag #gsaday. National and state partners from GLSEN, GSA Network, Campus Pride and Iowa Pride Network will help moderate the chat. The goal is to get real-time feedback from young people about the GSA movement and allow young people to share ideas and pose questions about how to make the movement more inclusive.

Among the national organizations joining GLSEN, GSA Network, and Campus Pride are: Matthew Shepard Foundation; The Trevor Project; Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation; Think Progress; Parent, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays National; Make it Better Project and the National Association of GSA Networks. In addition, over two dozen states, stretching from Oregon, to Nebraska to Georgia are participating in the national event.

Community members and organizations of all backgrounds are encouraged to organize and participate in local events on February 6, 2013. For more information, and to get involved, please visit: www.gsaday.org [1] or www.facebook.com/gsaday [2] or on Twitter at #gsaday.

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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 over 900 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 [3]
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