



Central New Jersey

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February, 2009

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Dear GLSEN Central New Jersey Members and Supporters:

The year 2009 brings us new faces, new dreams. As with our nation, so with our GLSEN Chapter, this is a time of renewal and recommitment. We've had the success of our Fall NJ Gay Straight Alliance Forum, met many educators at the NJEA convention, and teamed again with HiTOPS to offer a training for GSA advisors (page 4). We're excited about our community program with Pat Griffin of It Takes a Team! scheduled for February 23 (page 1). In ongoing work we offer our safe schools message to the New Jersey Commission on School Bullying (page 3), support No Name Calling Week and GLSEN Days of Action, and present workshops for educators.

We deeply appreciate the contributions of many. Without you, we would not be able sustain these activities or plan for our spring award ceremony to honor a student, an adult supporter, and a school organization making a difference in school climates, making them more safe and welcoming for all regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

You'll be hearing more about how to nominate a winner and how to attend the celebration of these persistent efforts of emerging leaders in our community.

We encourage each of you to join with us as we ask ourselves: What can I do to model respect for LGBT people? What can I do to support GLSEN CNJ's work for safe schools and respect for all? How can I participate in efforts to ensure that our cutting edge New Jersey statewide policies come to life in every school district and every child's life---so that our GLSEN vision of the future--"every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression" becomes a reality?

We're counting on you. Look in these pages for actions you can take. Together, let us make a difference in our children's schools and in their lives. In this 2009 climate of hope, this commitment to our children is our greatest possible investment in the future.

With care,

Carol Watchler, Co-Chair
GLSEN Central New Jersey

GLSEN Central New Jersey invites you to a community program featuring

It Takes A Team!

Making Athletics Respectful and Safe for Lesbian and Gay Students

With presenter **Pat Griffin**, Director of **It Takes A Team! Education Campaign for LGBT Issues in Sport**

Monday, February 23, 7:00-8:30pm

South Brunswick High School

750 Ridge Road, Monmouth Junction, NJ

The program will be in the Annex cafeteria. Please park in the back of the school by the tennis courts and follow the signs. Directions:

<http://www.sbschools.org/schools/sbhs/>.

Co-sponsored by South Brunswick High School GSA

This is an interactive presentation focused on creating a team climate in which everyone, including gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning athletes, are respected and can achieve their athletic and academic goals. Model policies and practical strategies based on It Takes A Team! resources will be shared. Bring your questions, concerns and ideas.

Check out www.ItTakesATeam.org for more information about It Takes A Team, Pat Griffin and resources for addressing LGBT issues in athletics. You can also order the It Takes A Team DVD for \$10 to cover postage and handling by emailing:

srobinson@womenssportsfoundation.org.

Shared Differences Examines LGBT Students of Color Experiences in School

NEW YORK – LGBT students of color face unique and diverse challenges regarding victimization at school, according to *Shared Differences: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students of Color in Our Nation's Schools*, a report released in January by GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network.

The report documents the experiences of over 2,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) middle and high school students of color who were African American or Black, Latino/a, Asian or Pacific Islander, Native American, and multiracial, using 2007 data collected as part of GLSEN's biennial survey of LGBT students, the National School Climate Survey, along with results from in-depth individual and group interviews.

"While research on the experiences of LGBT students has increased in recent years, few studies have examined the specific victimization of students who identify as people of color and LGBT," said GLSEN Executive Director Dr. Eliza Byard. "Our schools are diverse environments, and it is important to understand how our students experiences differ based on personal characteristics such as race and ethnicity. This report provides alarming evidence that we must act now to ensure that America's LGBT students of color are safe in school."

The report also provides descriptions of the experiences of LGBT students of color in their own words.

"You could very well on any day hear someone yelling across the hall, 'fag,' etc," said a 10th grade Latino male student in the report.

"I've heard it before. ... It's hurtful because it's just not something that you say. And it's just generally hurtful. And I know that I'll just be walking in a hallway, and someone will just say under their breath with a group of friends, "fag" ... and hearing things like that in my school - it kind of brings me down almost. It kind of negates any hope that I have for our school to be a better place."

Key Findings:

- Across all groups, sexual orientation and gender expression were the most common reasons LGBT students of color reported feeling unsafe in school. More than four out of five students, within each racial/ethnic group, reported verbal harassment in school because of sexual orientation and about two-thirds because of gender expression. At least a third of each group reported physical violence in school because of sexual orientation.
- More than half of African American/Black, Latino/a, Asian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial students also reported verbal harassment in school based on their race or ethnicity. Native American students (43%) were less likely than other students to report experiencing racially motivated verbal harassment.
- About a quarter of African American/Black and Asian/Pacific Islander students had missed class or days of school in the past month because they felt unsafe. Latino/a, Native American, and multiracial students were even more likely to be absent for safety reasons - about a third or more skipped class at least once or missed at least one day of school in the past month for safety reasons.

- Native American students experienced particularly high levels of victimization because of their religion, with more than half reporting the highest levels of verbal harassment (54%), and a quarter experiencing physical violence (26%).
- Less than half of students of color who had been harassed or assaulted in school in the past year said that they ever reported the incident to school staff. Furthermore, for those students who did report incidents to school staff, less than half believed that staff's resulting response was effective.
- Native American (57%) and multiracial (50%) students were more likely than other students of color in our survey to report incidents to a family member.
- Performance at school also suffered when students experienced high levels of victimization. Students' overall GPA dropped when they reported high severities of harassment based on sexual orientation and/or race/ethnicity. Students experiencing high severities of harassment also reported missing school more often.
- The report also looks at differing experiences based on the racial/ethnic make-up of students' schools. For all groups, LGBT students of color who were minorities in their school were much more likely to feel unsafe and experience harassment because of their race or ethnicity than those who were in the racial/ethnic majority.

To download the entire 51 page report click on the link or cut and paste the full address:
<http://tinyurl.com/de4sgd>
<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/2374.html>

HELP STOP BULLYING NOW!

Be a part of the solution

Governor's Commission on Bullying

To address the problem of bullying in New Jersey, Governor Jon Corzine and the New Jersey Legislature created the **Commission on Bullying in Schools**.

Over a nine-month period, the 14-member Commission will:

Study and make recommendations about school bullying laws and regulations;

Assess legal remedies and protections available to children who are victims of bullying and to their parents, guardians and teachers;

Evaluate training, funding and reporting on bullying;

Evaluate the efficacy of state agency collaborations to address bullying issues;

Convene public hearings to hear directly from concerned citizens throughout the state.

The NJ Commission on Bullying in Schools invites you to attend public hearings on the issue of school bullying and to make recommendations for improvement. Public testimony is vital to ensure the best possible solutions, so broad attendance is encouraged. The Central New Jersey hearing will be held on:

Wednesday, February 18, 6-9 p.m.

Lawrence High School

2525 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville

GLSEN CNJ will be submitting testimony.

To submit your testimony or other thoughts on the issue, you can e-mail at:

Bullying.commission@childadvocate.state.nj.us

To learn more, visit the Office of the Child Advocate's website at

www.childadvocate.nj.gov

DONATE

One of the most important things you can do to help is donate funds to **GLSEN Central NJ**.

You will be part of the local organizing efforts of the leading national organization working to ensure safe and effective schools for students.

P.O. Box 261

Hightstown, New Jersey

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UPCOMING EVENTS

GLSEN CNJ Training Meeting

Saturday, Feb. 7, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the West Windsor Library. If you would like to attend or would like more information contact Margo Saltzman at margosaltzman123@comcast.net

NNCW Creative Expression Contest entry deadline, Feb. 12. www.nonamecallingweek.org.

Public Hearing on Bullying in Schools

Wednesday, Feb. 18, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Lawrence High School, 2525 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville. For more information visit www.childadvocate.nj.gov

It Takes A Team! Making Athletics Respectful and Safe for Lesbian and Gay Students, Monday, Feb. 23, 7:00 to 8:30p.m. South Brunswick High School

TransAction! A day of awareness about gender identity/expression. Feb. 27. For more information visit www.dayofsilence.org/transaction.html

Bullying and Bias: A Prevention Seminar, Thursday, Feb. 26, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. *Sponsored by the Ocean County Human Relations Commission, Jersey Shore PFLAG, the Ocean County Library.* Speakers are J. Frank Vespa-Papaleo, Esq. and Dr. Paula C. Rodriguez Rust.

GLSEN envisions a future in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

Ice Breakers for GSAs

HiTOPS LGBTQ Coordinator, Corrine O'Hara, has put together a packet of 5 great activities and 5 fun ice-breakers for GSAs. All come with detailed instructions and materials. LGBTQ youth and advisors have used them with great fun and success. Packets may be purchased for \$25, payable to HiTOPS. Please contact Corrine at Corrine@hitops.org or 609-683-5155 x 217.

Support Our Community Partner

You can help our community partner, HiTOPS, with a donation through GoodSearch. Use GoodSearch as your search engine and each use will net our friends at HiTOPS one penny. It all adds up. To put this into action, go to <http://www.goodsearch.com> and when asked for your preferred charity, enter HiTOPS (Princeton, NJ). To learn about the outstanding work of this group, especially their long time support for LGBTQ youth, go to www.hitops.org.

GSA Advisors Meet and Share Expertise

On January 24 a core group of Gay Straight Alliance advisors came together for a workshop at HiTOPS in Princeton led by Corrine O'Hara, Health Educator and LGBTQ Coordinator at HiTOPS, and Carol Watchler, GLSEN CNJ Co-Chair. Each advisor had the chance to share the highlights and challenges of his or her students' GSA. They enjoyed hands-on experience with some of Corrine's treasure trove of community building activities as well as gaining an overview of GLSEN resources for GSA action and teacher education. This group promises to be the catalyst for ongoing networking to strengthen support for students in making their schools safe and welcoming for LGBT people and their allies. Tentative plans for follow up include additional sessions later in the year and active participation in a networking list among advisors. Any additional GSA advisors and school staff supporters who would like to be a part of this list are encouraged to send their contact information: Name, phone, e-mail, and school to cnj@njglsen.org.

New Membership Coordinator

My name is Rena Jacobson. I have been recently elected to the Board of Directors of GLSEN CNJ and am now the chairperson for the membership committee. I am very excited and happy to be involved with GLSEN CNJ events and programs. I would welcome any ideas or suggestions to enhance GLSEN CNJ membership. Please feel free to contact me at brdjacobson1@optimum.net.

Board of Directors

Rena Jacobson • Alexandra Lawrence • Lily McBeth • Corrine O'Hara • Paula Rodriguez Rust
Margo Saltzman • Selwa Shamy • Rachel Stine • Carol Watchler • Jack Zatz