



WE ARE THE ONES

ANNUAL REPORT

Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE)

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

Brian Juchems and Kristen Petroschius



Photo: Taken by Nicole Peaslee

Last year was one of vision and transformation for Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools. Kristen Petroschius joined our team as our Director of Administration and Development, and we engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process to guide our work as an organization over the next several years. We also began an internal anti-racism organizational assessment process with all board and staff to better understand how to challenge racism and other systems

of oppression in our work, and throughout all levels of our organization. Perhaps most importantly, we furthered our work to create schools in Wisconsin where all LGBTQ students can thrive.

Here are our highlights from 2011-2012:

Of the 1,321 educators GSAFE trained this past year, nearly 800 participated in our new Safe Zone program through 20 different school, district, regional, and conference workshops around the state. Designed to give school staff the chance to both learn how to respond to anti-LGBTQ language and behaviors and then practice responding in a safe environment, the training was developed with support from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Nearly 100% of Safe Zone trainings participants said they:

- Felt more confident in their ability to respond to anti-LGBT language
- Learned how to make their classroom safer for LGBT youth and youth from LGBT families
- Felt more motivated to make their classroom or school a safer place for LGBT youth and youth from LGBT families

Over 350 educators, youth, community leaders, and elected officials from over 50 Wisconsin communities attended Safe Schools, Safe Communities: State Superintendent’s Conference on LGBT Youth. Our Milwaukee-based conference, which was

organized in partnership with Diverse & Resilient, highlighted school policies and practices—including zero tolerance bullying policies—that discourage the participation of LGBTQ low-income youth and LGBTQ youth of color and lead them to being pushed out of school and into the prison system. As one of our keynote speakers, Geoffrey Winder (GSA Network’s National Racial & Economic Justice Manager) explained,

“The conference was a pivotal shift in the way people talk about GSAs, especially in building the capacity of GSAs to engage with queer youth of color organizing that is already happening.”

We strengthened our regional work by organizing regional gatherings for youth and adults in La Crosse, Rock County, and the North Woods. In December we teamed up with the Gay-Straight Alliance at UW-Rock County and brought high school students together with college students to brainstorm solutions to common challenges faced by GSAs. We also invited parents and other community members to join us for lunch and watch a video created by the Family Acceptance Project called “Always My Son.” In April, we worked with the LGBT Resource Center for the Seven Rivers Region in La Crosse to hold a GSA gathering the day after Day of Silence. Students had the opportunity to reflect on their work leading up to and on the Day of Silence, and talk about possibilities for working together more in the future.

As June Jordan invokes in her piece, “Poem for South African Women,” “we are the ones we have been waiting for” to be the change we want to see in the world. 2011–2012 was a year of transformation and vision for GSAFE. With the support of our community, we will continue to be that change so that all LGBTQ youth can thrive in Wisconsin’s schools.





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Hope Lee, Madison West High School
Luis Salinas, Madison La Follette High School
Dane Skaar, Madison East High School
Laura Springman, Madison West High School
Jaia Wener, Madison East High School

STAFF

Brian Juchems, Director of Programs
Kristen Petroschius, Director of Administration and Development
Monica Adams, Manager of Anti-Violence Initiative
Tim Michael, Manager of GSA Outreach

CONTACT INFORMATION

Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE)

301 S. Bedford St., #1, Madison, WI 53703
(608) 661-4141 • www.gsafewi.org



Photo: Taken by Nicole Peaslee

OUR MISSION

Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools increases the capacity of LGBTQ youth and students, educational staff, and families to create school environments where all LGBTQ youth and students thrive. We do this by:

- Developing the leadership of LGBTQ and allied youth
- Supporting Gay-Straight Alliances
- Training educational staff on creating safe and supportive school environments
- Strengthening inclusive families, and
- Advancing Educational Justice

STATEWIDE SPOTLIGHT

GSAFE works with school communities across the state. Each year there are many stories of struggle and success. Here are a few highlights from 2011-2012.

LA CROSSE, WI -
GSAFE held our first-ever La Crosse-area GSA gathering. Many of the students who attended wrote, "Let's have another one of these soon!" on their evaluations.

WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI - The GSA partnered with the Hmong-American Student Organization to run a school-wide campaign to address racism.

SOUTH MILWAUKEE, WI -
As part of Girl Scout final project, a GSA student launched a year-long campaign to help increase positive representations of LGBTQ people in the media.

PLATTEVILLE, WI -
The GSA organized the school's first "Words Hurt Week," and brought in Jamie Nabozny as a guest speaker. The GSA president said that during Words Hurt Week she actually noticed people modifying their language to avoid using hurtful slurs.

SUN PRAIRIE, WI - The GSA in Sun Prairie has been working for a year on building a resource binder on issues related to LGBTQ students. Now that it's complete, they plan to make it available to all the staff at their high school and possibly share it with other schools.

DEVELOPING YOUTH LEADERSHIP

“GSAFE and the GSA movement really show how youth aren’t just the future, but are also involved in the present, making a difference now. Things like academics and the media show us what is wrong with the world, but the GSA movement teaches me and other youth how to change it. The skills and motivation I’ve gained through working with my GSA and GSAFE have left me more prepared to promote justice not only in the LGBTQ and educational justice movements, but in everything I do.”

- Camden Goetz, GSA Student Leader, Lincoln High School (Wisconsin Rapids)

675

YOUTH TRAINED TO INTERRUPT BULLYING AND VIOLENCE

189

YOUTH TRAINED IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY



DID YOU KNOW?



Youth leadership experiences can have positive effects on behaviors and skills, including self-efficacy, self-determination, communication, and problem-solving. Each of these skills is linked to higher student achievement, lower dropout rates, and/or better postschool outcomes.

Source: Eccles & Gooman, 2002; Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem & Ferber, 2003; Sagaway, 2003

SUPPORTING GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCES

“A student at our high school was stopped in the hallway by a substitute teacher but was not addressed by her gender pronoun. Even after the student corrected the substitute, she was still addressed improperly. The student told another teacher about the incident and that teacher was very proactive and immediately contacted us. It’s great that even people who aren’t involved in the GSA know they can count on us as an immediate resource to support both students and staff around LGBT issues.”

– Donna Struck, GSA Advisor, Fond du Lac High School

17

NEW GSAs IN
2011-2012

142

GSAs IN WISCONSIN

“My best friend has always been a strong ally and supporter, but we felt like other LGBT students didn’t have supportive people like her. Starting a GSA at our school would celebrate that. In the past year we’ve made videos, run promotions, and held events to make students and staff more aware of our program. Being organized helps build that alliance, and we’re really privileged to have a supportive administration and staff at our school.”

– Vicente Lezama, GSA Student Leader,
Fond du Lac High School



Photo: Taken by Nicole Peaslee

DID YOU KNOW?



Research has shown that in schools with support groups such as GSAs, lesbian, gay, and bisexual students were less likely to experience threats of violence, miss school because they felt unsafe, or attempt suicide than those in schools without such groups (GLSEN). 27% of Wisconsin public high schools have a GSA or similar club.

TRAINING EDUCATORS

“One of the most challenging things for educators is being prepared to stop bullying when it happens. We know there a number of ways [LGBT youth] can ‘fall out’ if they don’t feel safe or that adults have their back—with academics, negative health behaviors, or any number of things. In general, if students feel like adults in their school will respond, they feel much safer being who they are. GSAFE has trained everyone in the district now to help us achieve our goal of providing a really safe environment for kids to learn every day.”

– *Judy Christensen, Stoughton Middle School Counselor*

1,312

EDUCATORS TRAINED IN
CREATING SAFE AND
SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS
FOR LGBTQ YOUTH

65%

LGBTQ STUDENTS IN WISCONSIN
COULD IDENTIFY SIX OR MORE
SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL STAFF
MEMBERS



Photo: Taken by Nicole Peaslee

DID YOU KNOW?



The presence of six or more supportive staff in a school has led to LGBTQ students having a greater sense of belonging to their school and community, attending school more frequently, achieving higher grade point averages, and being more likely to plan on attending college. (GLSEN)

FINANCIALS

July 2011–June 2012 Balance Sheets

Below is Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools' Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended June 30, 2012.

REVENUES

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Individual Contributions | \$61,646 |
| Grants/Contracts | \$130,799 |
| Programs & Special Events | \$107,902 |
| Other income | \$8,065 |
| Total | \$308,412 |

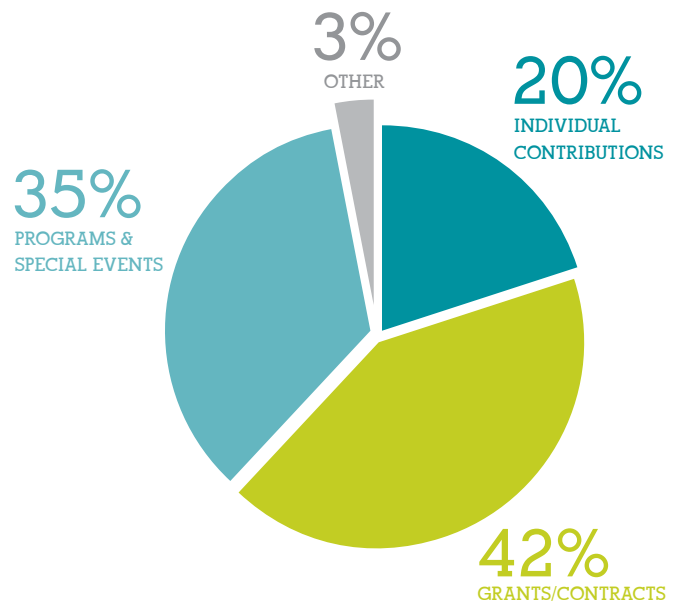
EXPENSES

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Programs | \$217,887 |
| Administrative | \$36,799 |
| Fundraising | \$54,646 |
| Total | \$309,332 |

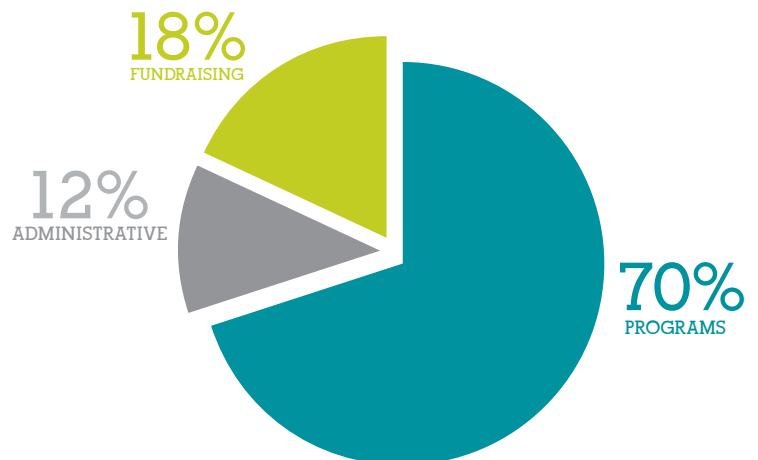
NET ASSETS

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Beginning of Year | \$71,893 |
| End of Year | \$81,314 |
| Change | \$9,421 |

REVENUE & OTHER SUPPORT



EXPENSES



GSAFE was audited by Wegner LLP. A complete Independent Auditor's Report may be obtained by going to www.gsafewi.org, writing us at 301 S. Bedford St., #1, Madison, WI 53703, or by calling (608) 661-4141.

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INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

\$25,000 and up

Brighter Futures
Liberty Hill Foundation's Queer Youth Fund

\$10,000-\$24,999

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Milwaukee Foundation
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Penzeys Spices
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\$1,000-\$2,499

Alliant Energy Foundation
American Family Insurance
Badgerland Softball League
Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS
By Youth for Youth
CUNA Mutual Group
Kraft Foods
LGBT Campus Center, UW-Madison
Madison Gas & Electric
Our Lives Magazine

\$500-\$999

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\$10,000

Purple Moon Foundation

\$5,000

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