Last year was one of vision and transformation for Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools. Kristen Petroshius 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-LGBTQ 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.
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

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

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

This report covers the period July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012.
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.

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.

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

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.
“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)

**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 & Goo, 2002; Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem & Ferber, 2003; Sagaway, 2003
"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

"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

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.
“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

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)
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

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.
INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

$25,000 and up
Brighter Futures
Liberty Hill Foundation’s Queer Youth Fund

$10,000–$24,999
Brico Fund
Community Shares of Wisconsin
Wisconsin AIDS Fund of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

$2,500–$9,999
Eldon E. Murray Fund
Madison Rotary Foundation
Philanthrofund Foundation

CORPORATE/BUSINESS/GROUP FUNDERS

$2,500–$5,000
CDW
Penzeys Spices
UW Health

$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
Cullen Weston Pines & Bach LLP
Fair Wisconsin
First Unitarian Society
Harmony Acupuncture
Jim Hartman Insurance Agency
Journey Mental Health Center
Liz Lauer and Associates
Madison Marathon
University of Wisconsin - Madison
Wegner CPA

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

$10,000
Purple Moon Foundation

$5,000
Chuck Moyer

$2,500
Sue Goldwomon and Arlene Zaucha
Jenny Pressman
Mr. William Wartmann

$1,000
Emily Dickmann and Tom Kulpic
Patrick Farbaugh and Our Lives Magazine
Dr. Maurice N. Gattis
Steven Morrison and Goldie Kadushin
Tamara Packard and Renee Herber
Angela Prestil
Smart Dental
Jane and Jon Stevermer
Jill and Paul Stiegler
The Ripples Project

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Anne Clauser
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Kim Nemacheck
Jeff Poltawsky and Tom Arnhold
Amelia Ramirez and Mike Edmonds
Kyle Richmond
Tim and Pat Size
Ms. Adrienne Torf
Katie Wilkin and Lauren Lebowh!

$250–$499
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Jan and Bob Beitlich
Fawn Bilgere
Nyle Biodni
Tonia Brock and Kristen Petroshiue
Beth Bruckbauer
Beverly Buhr and Carin Bringelson
Julie Busche
Chia-Chee Chiu and David Gill
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WE APPRECIATE SUCH BROAD COMMUNITY SUPPORT!

Because of our large number of supporters, we were only able to print donors who had given $500 or more as an institution or $250 or more as an individual. Thank you to everyone who gave gifts and volunteered their time and talents with GSAFE last year.