

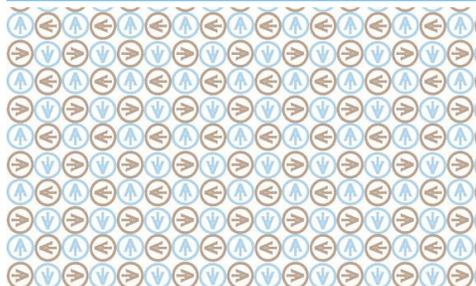


ARROWS

CHARTING THE COURSE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
ILLINOIS SAFE SCHOOLS ALLIANCE

**SUMMER
2013**



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The mission of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance is to promote safety, support and healthy development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth, in Illinois and communities, through advocacy, education, youth organizing and research.

Words from the Executive Director

Dear Supporters,

We are wrapping up another school year of effective and innovative work to ensure schools are safe and respectful places for all youth regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. The 2012-13 school-year, like all school years, has presented the Alliance with unique challenges and opportunities, and all of us – youth leaders, staff, Board and volunteers – continue to be moved by and grateful for the bravery of students, families and school personnel around the state who are genuinely engaging in the work to transform schools to benefit all students. In this “end-of-year” newsletter We are excited to share with you stories highlighting some of the challenges and successes over this school year:

- The growth and success of the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) club network in Illinois and the addition to our staff of Lawrence Carter as GSA Network Coordinator
- Our partnership with PFLAG Belleville and the St. Clair County Regional Office of Education to provide professional development to school personnel in southern Illinois
- Another hugely successful Day of Silence/Night of Noise led by the Chicago-area youth committee demanding protections for transgender and gender non-conforming students in schools. *(Pictured above: The youth committee rockin’ it out at the Night of Noise in the snow!)*

- Efforts to bring professional development to pre-service teachers at Illinois State University, the producer of the largest number of teachers across Illinois
- The Policy Committee's focus on work to interrupt the school-to-prison-pipeline, limit the use of exclusionary school discipline, and challenge the effectiveness of high-stakes testing

As always, that Alliance is so grateful to you, reading this newsletter right now, for all of your support, encouragement and participation. We look forward to your thoughts, questions, and direction moving forward.

All my best,



Shannon Sullivan

PS – Join us on Sunday, June 9 in Champaign to celebrate the opening of the local Champaign office and honor those who got us there. (see back page for complete details!)

Central Illinois Training Partnership

Did you know that Illinois State University (ISU) produces the most teachers of all the universities in Illinois? That's why we are so excited about our growing partnership with the LGBT/Queer Studies and Services Institute at ISU to provide anti- LGBTQ bullying training to pre-service teachers. Additional co-sponsors included Diversity Advocacy and ISU Pride.

At our first session on April 24, our own Sarah Schriber provided an in-depth two-hour training on the following:

- LGBTQ terminology
- the legal history of the rights of LGBTQ students
- teacher's responsibilities to provide a safe learning environment
- practical ways teachers can create that environment

Turnout was small but feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive. We plan to grow this collaboration, offering a similar seminar twice in the fall with more outreach to professors to encourage their students to attend. It is so empowering to be able to address anti-LGBTQ bullying before it reaches the classroom and to see so many future teachers who are proactive and committed to creating a safe and welcoming classroom.

How can you get more involved?

Contribute your time.

Volunteers are essential to the work. You can choose your level of involvement, from a one-time event to an ongoing committee work.

Contribute your resources.

The Alliance needs financial support, in-kind donations, and your networking with others.

Email Loren Linder at loren@illinoissafeschools.org or call 312/368-9070 x314, and let us know how you would like to help!

**Alliance
Partners with
LGBT/Queer
Studies and
Services
Institute at
Illinois State
University,
Normal,
Illinois.**



All our thanks to Jeff Derr, Alliance Development Committee member, for his tremendous leadership, commitment, and dedication in bringing to life his vision of the Fierce & Fabulous Fashion Show which was held at minibar on Saturday, May 4.



Join us in thanking all those who made the night possible with their partnership and generosity:

Halsted Vodka
MODA Boutique
minibar
attaboy! designs
Salon 1800

Models: Lou Nissan, Moe Sulieman, Tony Hristov, Robert Gonzalez, D'Angelo Tyler, Ginia Zobel, Maria Isabel, Ruth Díaz, and Susie Gonzales

Chris McAnaney, *AV setup & mgmt*
Stephen Wheeler, *model mgmt*
Matthew Harvat, *general consult & advice*

A huge thanks to our recent event partners and contributors!

2nd Annual Bowl-a-thon to STRIKE OUT BULLYING

Our most sincere thanks to this year's dedicated team captains, bowlers, cheerleaders, and most especially the young people, all of whom so generously gave of their time (and \$!) to support this year's bowl-a-thon held at Diversey River Bowl, Chicago, on Saturday, April 13. The event's tremendous success is the result of these dedicated individuals and pictured below is this year's #1 fundraisers, Team Pins & Needles captained by Meghan Tadel!

Please join us in giving special thanks to this year's fabulous team captains: Mark Fox, Meghan Tadel, Stacey Horn, Lauren Sullivan, Lisa Jaburek, Shannon Sullivan, Michelle Dluzak, Brea Adams, Loren Linder & Brian Savage, and Lawrence Carter – thank you!! We too are extremely grateful for the fundraising support and participation of the young people and allied adults from Kelvyn Park High School, Phoenix Military Academy, the CPS Queer Prom, Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA), and the Chicago Gay Hockey Association (CGHA).

Each of the individuals and organizations above reached far and wide into their generous networks, garnering more than a 50% increase in revenue from the Bowl-a-thon over last year. Many, many thanks to all those who made a donation (or donations!) to support the pledges made by each team captain or bowler. Through your generosity, the Alliance continues its work to promote safety, support and healthy development for LGBTQ youth, in Illinois schools and communities.



Youth Brave the Cold to Celebrate Night of Noise

The Night of Noise, an annual culminating event for the Day of Silence, is an outdoor rally in the Thompson Center Plaza. Most years, we find ourselves letting people know that rain or shine (and usually rain) we will be celebrating in the Plaza. This year, with the temperature averaging about 30 degrees, with rain, snow, and hail coming down periodically throughout the day, we were put to the test in our commitment to this celebration.



The terrible weather, however, didn't stop a small but mighty group of 100 youth showing up to the plaza to collectively break the silence. Though the Youth Committee decided to pull the plug early, we still had the opportunity to rally the crowd to support the Youth Committee ask that Chicago Public Schools adopt guidelines to support trans* and gender non-conforming youth, as well as the good fortune to see many talented youth performers. Our performers included the Youth Committee's own Leila Deluxx (Abe Akande) performing fiercely in the cold, Don Williams from Daniel Hale Williams College of Medicine performing his own spoken word poetry, the Lyons Township Steppers, and performers Annabelle Daily and Kata Bel Air from Riverside Brookfield High School. The commitment of our youth continues to inspire us all.

YOUTH COMMITTEE MISSION



**ILLINOIS SAFE SCHOOLS ALLIANCE
YOUTH COMMITTEE**

We educate youth on issues that affect them so that they can **become leaders, take action, and make long term change.**

Making Schools Safer in St. Clair County

Thanks to the generous work and support of PFLAG Belleville, the Alliance is working with the St. Clair County Regional Office of Education to provide professional development to school personnel on addressing sexual orientation and gender identity topics and issues across the K-12 spectrum. David Fischer, Program Director, and Shannon Sullivan, Executive Director, have both had the privilege of traveling to Belleville, IL, to work alongside school personnel and juvenile justice officials to bring our expertise to their local contexts. During a session specifically for middle school personnel, the participants had an opportunity to share with one another effective disciplinary interventions that do not involve suspending/expelling students, but rather focusing on healing, learning new skills, and practicing behaving differently in the future. Due to the high marks received on evaluations from the sessions, the Regional Office of Education has agreed to continue the partnership throughout the 2013-14 school year!





GSAs given the chance to interact with LGBTQ history

It has been an exciting and busy few months for Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) with the end of the school year approaching. We would like to highlight some of the great partnerships and organizing work we have been fortunate enough to accomplish this year.

Our journey with the Legacy Project Education Initiative (LPEI) started early in the school year. It was apparent that the sky was the limit with what we could do with all the available LGBTQ history at our fingertips. We narrowed it down to piloting the Legacy Project Education Initiative with our organizing work with GSAs around the Day of Silence (DOS). In order to achieve this goal, we reached out to Project Shout Out (a LGBT student group at Northwestern University) who, like us, is committed to offering support to GSAs.

The Alliance and Project Shout Out held a weekend training to get familiar with the history provided by LPEI, and together we developed strategies for working with and for LGBTQ youth involved in their GSAs. I remember sending out the first emails to the GSA advisors to introduce this amazing partnership; they were ready to jump onboard and bring this quality programming into their GSAs. We worked extensively with six schools across the Chicagoland area to help support the creation and implementation of Legacy Project Education Initiative with the work the GSAs were doing leading up to the Day of Silence.

The excitement of the GSA members in getting to choose which Legacy Walk inductee they wanted to place in their school was one of the best experiences Lawrence Carter, GSA Network Coordinator, has had in his career. The experience of seeing these young people take the lead on educating their fellow classmates on LGBTQ history was truly remarkable.

Later, replicas of the plaques displayed on Halsted Street went up in school lunch rooms, history classes, and some even traveled to different classrooms throughout the week leading up to the Day of Silence. Students also incorporated parts of the LPEI curriculum along with their morning announcements and after-school assemblies.

All of us at the Alliance are thrilled to work with the Legacy Project on their Education Initiative. In our work we have found that by bringing LGBTQ issues into school curriculums in positive ways is one of the corner stones to achieving safer schools for all our youth.

For more info on The Legacy Project and the Legacy Project Initiative, visit their website at <http://legacyprojectchicago.org>.



Legacy Walk replica on display at Tintley Park High School.



Chicagoland youth at Spring Youth Summit planning for the Day of Silence.

POLICY IN ACTION

The Alliance supports the following Illinois legislation:

HB 61 – Student HIV Notification Law (Passed the House 61-55 on March 7; to be called for full vote in the Senate in May.)

HB 61 would repeal Illinois' law, which is the only one in the U.S. that requires health authorities to give the names of HIV-positive students to school principals. HIV-positive students whose status is made public face stigma, bullying and discrimination from students and school personnel alike. With the introduction of universal precautions nearly two decades ago, there is no medical reason for such notification.

HB 1058 – Zero Tolerance Student Discipline (After the Alliance and partners organized a response to HB 1058, the House sponsor decided to “table” it, effectively withdrawing it from legislative consideration.)

The bill would have mandated that schools develop zero tolerance policies for reporting student violations of their discipline codes to local law enforcement agencies and enter into formal agreements with law enforcement to exchange student information.

HB 2675 – Comprehensive Health Education Act (Passed the House 66-52 on April 17; passed out of the Senate Executive Committee 9-5 on May 2; to be called for full Senate vote in May.)

HB 2675, which amends existing law to require that sexual health education courses taught in grades 6-12 must be medically accurate, age-appropriate, and complete – in addition to abstinence based – in order to decrease high rates of sexually transmitted diseases and infections, and unintended pregnancies for Illinois youth.

SB0010 - Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act (Passed the Senate 34-21 on February 14; passed out of the House Executive Committee 6-5 on February 26; to be called for full House vote in May.)

SB 0010 would ensure that Illinois marriage laws apply equally to marriages of same-sex and different-sex couples and their children, and that regardless of whether the marriage is of a same-sex or different-sex couple, couples would have the same benefits, protections, and responsibilities under law.

HB 2213 – Ensuring Success in Education Act (Passed the House 76-33 on March 22; will be heard in Senate Education Committee on May 7.)

HB 2213 would ensure that the privacy and safety of school-age students who are parents, expectant parents, or the victims of domestic or sexual violence are protected and that they are provided the protection, instruction, and related support services necessary to graduate from high school.

Join the Alliance Policy Committee!

As a member of the Alliance Policy Committee, you could be instrumental in efforts like those and more. Are you interested in:

- Partnering with a broad-based group of committed advocates to develop the Alliance's influential policy initiatives to create safe and welcoming schools for all youth and families regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression?
- Working with schools, agencies and government officials to put policy theory into practice?
- Making a powerful difference in schools across Illinois?

We would love to have you!

For more information, please contact Sarah Schriber at (312) 368-9070 ext. 323 or sarah@illinoissafeschools.org

BBBS FINDINGS:

(intended for school communities to better understand imbalances of power and the role they play in bullying, intervention and reporting.)

- 87% of students who reported experiencing bullying identified it as bias-based bullying.
- Nearly half of the students who reported experiencing bias-based bullying said they were bullied based on 2-4 different aspects of identity, while 12% said that were bullied based on 5 or more aspects of their identity.
- Students who reported experiencing bullying based on 5 or more aspects of identity had more absences from school and more often contemplated suicide than students who experienced bullying based on fewer aspects of identity.
- 61% of students reported that they engaged in bullying because they themselves had been bullied or believe they may have done so.
- The top four reasons students gave for not intervening in bullying were that they
 - didn't know if it was a joke
 - didn't want to be perceived as a "snitch"
 - didn't think it would change anything
 - thought it might make things worse

Spring Meeting of Prevent School Violence Illinois

On April 23, Prevent School Violence Illinois (PSVI) hosted its Spring Meeting at the new Alexian Brother's Women and Children's Hospital in Hoffman Estates. Members of PSVI's Core Support Team introduced Comprehensive School Transformation to a group of more than



75 old and new partners from a broad range of organizations and agencies. Included among them were the Illinois Commission on Human Rights, Power-Pac (Parents Organized to Win, Educate and Renew - Policy Action Council), Children's Home and Aid, the Cook County Sheriff, personnel from elementary and high school districts, and many others from as far as Champaign, Peoria and Rock Island.

Comprehensive School Transformation (CST), the overarching recommendation of the Illinois School Bullying Prevention Task Force, is the process by which a committed and engaged school community can develop optimal conditions for the effective learning and healthy development of its students. The process of CST includes six components: stakeholder engagement, data-driven decision making, policy, professional development, student supports and services, and restorative discipline. These components work to support and reinforce each other in a cyclical fashion undergirded by a foundation of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

The Spring Meeting focused on the data-driven component of CST, presenting for the first time, findings from the pilot administration of the Bias-Based Bullying Survey (BBBS) given to more than 5,000 Illinois students in 2012. PSVI partnered with Dr. Stacey Horn, Christina Peter, and Katie Romeo from the University of Illinois at Chicago, to develop the BBBS which is intended to enable school communities to better understand the ways that imbalances of power based on aspects of personal identity (race, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) play a role in bullying victimization, perpetration, retaliatory bullying, intervention and reporting.

For more information about the BBBS or PSVI, please contact Sarah Schriber at psvillinois@gmail.com.

IGNITE CHANGE

AN ALLIANCE LAUNCH EVENT

SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 2013 from 3PM - 6PM

at EMERALD CITY LOUNGE
118 N 1ST ST, CHAMPAIGN, IL

Help us officially celebrate the opening
of the Alliance Champaign office
and join us in honoring:

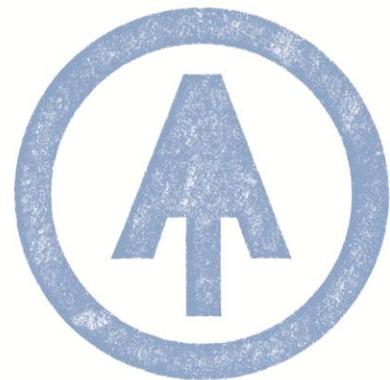
ALLY OF THE YEAR
Dr. Laura Taylor

We will also recognize the tremendous
leadership, dedication and partnership the
Alliance has received over the years from
eCISSA, CISSA, and HSSI.

PLEASE RSVP BY FRIDAY, MAY 31

Tickets are \$35 per person
& can be purchase at
www.IllinoisSafeSchools.org

Questions, please *contact Loren Linder at*
loren@illinoissafeschools.org or
312.368.9070 x 314.



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