



BELIEVE

ANNUAL REPORT

Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE)

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

Brian Juchems and Kristen Petroschius



Photo: Taken by Nicole Peaslee

A pivotal shift occurred last year for us here at GSAFE. Our board and staff completed an intensive consulting process around how to become a multiracial racial justice organization; Key Jackson joined our team as Educational Justice Manager; and we became the host organization for the Wisconsin Educational Justice Coalition. While this is just the beginning of a longer-term process, this concrete work has begun to move us forward in building an organization and a movement where all LGBTQ

youth can bring their full selves, including LGBTQ people of color.

HERE ARE OUR HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2012-2013:

GSAFE helped win non-discrimination protections for transgender and gender nonconforming students in the McFarland and Oregon school districts, which joined Madison and Wisconsin Rapids in adopting these protections. GSAFE staff worked with students, school staff and administrators, parents, and community members in both districts to plan and implement a strategy to educate school board members about the importance of creating clear expectations around the safety and inclusion of transgender and gender non-conforming youth. *Students from both districts spoke to board members about their experiences and the experiences of classmates, naming nondiscrimination protections as the first step toward ensuring safe and inclusive schools.* In both districts the change was approved unanimously. GSAFE staff began similar conversations and continues to work with other key districts on this issue with the longer-term vision of having "gender identity" and "gender expression" added to our statewide Pupil Nondiscrimination policy.

GSAFE became the host organization for the Wisconsin Educational Justice Coalition, which brings together organizations that focus on youth leadership and community

organizing as strategies to improve Wisconsin education for youth of color, low-income youth, youth with disabilities, Native American youth, immigrant youth and LGBTQ youth. As part of this process, GSAFE entered into conversations on both national and statewide levels about the need to bring together educational justice and safe schools movements. Seen as separate issues for too long, LGBTQ youth of color are often targeted by zero tolerance policies and other unfair discipline practices, which then leads to school pushout, homelessness, and incarceration. GSAFE recognizes that we are only at the start of engaging in educational justice work and that communities of color have long been at the forefront of the educational justice movement.

GSAFE began our "GSAs for Justice" curriculum with the GSAs at Madison East High School and Stoughton High School. "GSAs for Justice" was created by the GSA Network in California. Recognizing that most GSAs are predominantly made up of white students and rarely include issues of racial justice, GSA Network wanted to create a series of lessons that would help the students in GSA develop their analysis of how racism, sexism, and other systems of oppression are playing out in their schools. The hope is that in doing so, GSA leaders will pave the way for students of color to find support and take on leadership within their GSAs and schools as well as learn how to create coalitions with student of color and disability rights groups to be more effective in their efforts in creating safe and supportive schools for all youth.

2012-2013 was a year of pivotal shifts for GSAFE. With the support of our community, we will continue to move forward our vision of schools across Wisconsin where all LGBTQ youth can thrive.

Two handwritten signatures in black ink, one on the left and one on the right.





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Luis Salinas, Madison La Follette High School
Dane Skaar, Madison East High School

STAFF

Brian Juchems, Director of Programs
Kristen Petroschius, Director of Administration
and Development
Key Jackson, Educational Justice Manager
Tim Michael, GSA Outreach Manager

CONTACT INFORMATION

Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE)
122 E. Olin Ave. • Suite 290 • Madison, WI 53713



Photo: Taken by Nicole Peaslee

OUR MISSION

Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools increases the capacity of LGBTQ students, educators, and families to create schools in Wisconsin where all youth thrive. We do this by:

- Developing the leadership of LGBTQ students.
- Supporting Gay-Straight Alliances.
- Training educational staff on creating safe and supportive school communities.
- Advancing educational justice.
- Deepening racial, gender, and social justice.

DEVELOPING YOUTH LEADERSHIP

“Being involved with GSAFE and the Student Planning Team gives me a chance to volunteer in my community, and I get to do what I love to do: I love to help people. I get to help LGBTQ people, people with different identities, and it helps me be a better leader. I have become a better leader in my own GSA, and I think lots of folks in my school don’t look at me as just ‘some kid.’ They look to me as a leader, as a person with knowledge. That feels wonderful. I am also involved with the restorative justice programs at my school, and it makes me happy that GSAFE is talking about restorative justice and the school-to-prison pipeline. I want to show that we have power as youth leaders. I don’t want Wisconsin to just be known as the dairy state. I want us to be known as a state that fights for school justice and education justice.”

- Charlotte Detra, GSA Student Leader, La Follette High School (Madison)

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YOUTH TRAINED IN
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
AND ADVOCACY

Photo: Taken by Sam Koresh



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

“The GSA is more than **just** another club. To many of the students, the GSA is a family. For students who are struggling with their sexual orientation or gender identity, this group is a safe haven and a happy, supportive group that provides relief from a world that isn’t always as accepting as we would like.”

“In addition, coming from a conservative county in the state, it is very important that the GSA is actively working to educate students and staff on LGBTQ issues and how to create a safe environment for all students. Our GSA is actively involved in educating students, staff, and the community on issues of diversity and school climate. In fact, the students spear-headed a school-wide, comprehensive Empowerment Week focused on creating a safe environment for all students. This was a transformative time for our school, and I am proud that the GSA took the lead on this effort to make our school a more accepting place for all students.”

– Greta Voit, GSA Advisor, Waukesha North High School



Photo: Waukesha North GSA

151

GSA's IN WISCONSIN

9

NEW GSA's IN
2012-2013

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). Twenty-seven percent of Wisconsin public high schools have a GSA or similar club.

TRAINING EDUCATORS

“We wanted to do something more than have optional trainings for educators on how to create safe and supportive schools for LGBTQ students. When it’s optional you’re often preaching to the choir. For a lot of staff it’s a matter of education. There are still teachers who have never thought about what LGBTQ youth might be experiencing in our schools. It might never have occurred to them how much pain our kids are in. I’ve always known in my work that LGBTQ youth felt more bullied and had more adverse experiences. With the help of GSAFE, we have begun the process of making sure all our high school staff and all district administrators are trained on how to create safe and supportive environments for LGBTQ students.”

“I started advocating for the needs of LGBTQ youth in our district because no one else was doing it. I’ve been thanked by colleagues who have told me that they couldn’t do the work because they would be seen as recruiting or pushing a personal agenda. It’s really important for LGBTQ youth and adults to have straight allies and to see people standing up for someone else. It’s empowering.”

– Anne Tobias-Becker, Green Bay School Social Worker

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

59%

810

EDUCATORS TRAINED IN
CREATING SAFE AND
SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT
FOR LGBTQ YOUTH



Photo: Taken by Brian Juchems

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 2011).

ADVANCING EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE

“The Waswagoning Youth Council is comprised of mostly Native American high school students. In our community, our students face oppression on a daily basis in the school systems. When our youth group meets with other ‘minority’ groups in the coalition it strengthens their spirits. The groups can empower each other and find solutions to common problems through brainstorming and talking about what has worked for different communities in the state. Also, each group can learn about the unique qualities of diversity and how this can foster leadership. The Wisconsin Educational Justice Coalition is a great tool for our students to learn to be aware of statewide issues surrounding education and how to network with common groups to make their voices heard.”

– LeAnn M. White, Lac du Flambeau Tribal
Education Department



5 ORGANIZATIONS are involved with the Wisconsin Educational Justice Coalition to ensure youth of color, low-income youth, youth with disabilities, and LGBTQ youth are empowered to learn while being valued and respected. They are:

- Urban Underground
- Voces de la Frontera/Youth Empowered in the Struggle (YES!)
- Wisconsin Indian Education Association
- Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
- Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE)

DID YOU KNOW?



In Wisconsin in 2011–2012, 37% of black youth, 34% of English Language Learners, 31% of youth with disabilities, 26% of Latino youth, and 25% of Native American youth did not graduate from high school within four years. Nationally, 33% of LGBTQ students drop out of high school to escape the violence, harassment, and isolation they face in school.

FINANCIALS

July 2012-June 2013 Balance Sheets

Below is GSAFE's Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended June 30, 2013.

REVENUES

Individual Contributions	\$119,999
Grants/Contracts	\$147,564
Programs & Special Events	\$125,654
Other Income	\$2,326
Total	\$395,543

EXPENSES

Programs	\$249,880
Administrative	\$47,103
Fundraising	\$70,328
Total	\$367,311

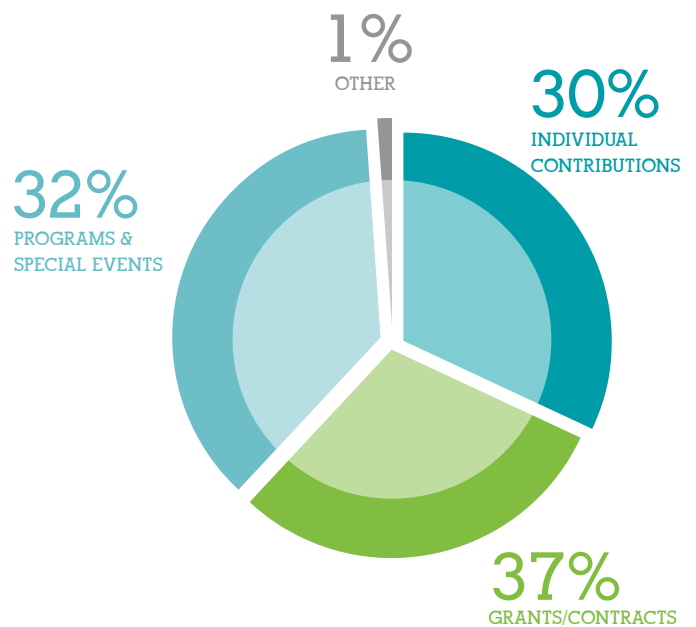
NET ASSETS

Beginning of Year	\$81,314
End of Year	\$109,546
Change	\$28,232

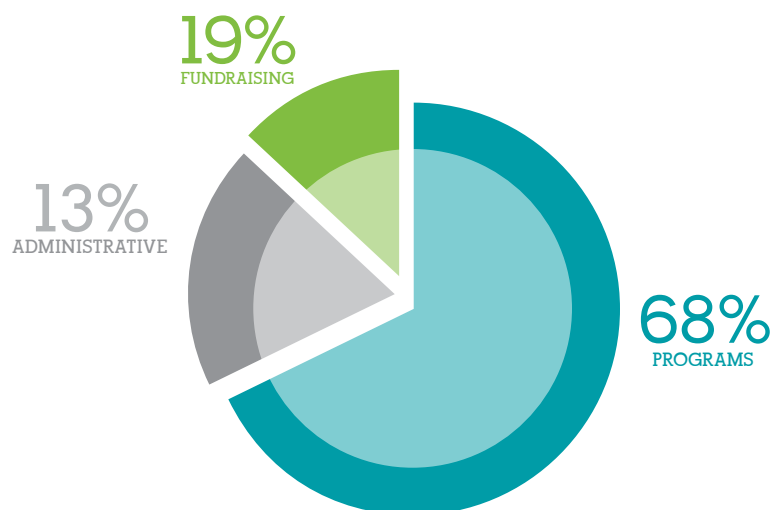


GSAFE was audited by Wegner LLP. A complete Independent Auditor's Report may be obtained by going to www.gsafewi.org, writing us at 122 E. Olin Ave., Suite 290, Madison, WI 53713, or by calling (608) 661-4141.

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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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