



NEWS

GLSEN is the foremost national education organization creating safe schools for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

We are making LGBT bullying, harassment and name-calling unacceptable in America's schools.

We engage and empower educators as partners in creating schools where every student can fully participate in school life.

We are ensuring that the national education agenda to create effective schools includes LGBT issues.

OUR CHAPTER

Our chapter, founded in 1997, serves six counties in New York State: Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess and Ulster.

CONTACT US

P.O. Box 604
Yorktown Heights NY 10598
Tel : 914-962-7888
Fax : 914-962-8280
E-Mail: glsenhv@aol.com
www.glsenhudsonvalley.org

NEWSLETTER

Michael J. Witsch, Editor
Mary Jane Karger, Asst. Editor
Rick Slansky, Layout



DAY OF SILENCE Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Founded in 1996, the Day of Silence has become the largest single student-led action towards creating safer schools for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. It's Wednesday, April 26 this year, and students in our area are making plans to participate.

Visit dayofsilence.org to register and find resources including the history of the event and a detailed organizing manual.

Continued on page 2

BREAKING THE SILENCE AT CENTER LANE

Center Lane invites all students to an after-school "Breaking the Silence." Sara Braun, Center Lane's Director, says it will be a "big event in our new space" at 845 No. Broadway, White Plains, 10603. The building, which has ample, free parking, is the headquarters of Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS), which funds Center Lane.

For more information, contact Sara everyday but Wednesdays – 914-761-0600 ext. 133

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Many people tried to get me to speak throughout the day, when they saw that by speaking to me it only strengthened my silence they soon stopped...Students participated by wearing a rainbow ribbon and the oath card...All the teachers were wearing white ribbons and even our assistant principal decided NOT to talk for the day. It was a lot of fun and I think a great learning experience...I think people finally know that there is a much bigger silence and they should know about it.

Pennsylvania HS Student

Today, is the Day of Silence, and it is only second hour for me, already I have had every student in my first two hour classes ask me what was going on, in which I gave them a slip of paper of explanation, and turned around so that they could read my shirt, which all of our schools GSA members are wearing today, with different facts about the oppression of gays, lesbians, transsexuals, and bisexuals. There was an impact; many people have said that it was great we are being silent for a cause.

Michigan HS Student

What is the Day of Silence?

Day of Silence, a project of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) in collaboration with the United States Student Association (USSA), is a student-led day of action where those who support making anti-LGBT bias unacceptable in schools take a day-long vow of silence to recognize and protest the discrimination and harassment -- in effect, the silencing -- experienced by LGBT students and their allies.

Who started the Day of Silence?

In 1996, students at the University of Virginia organized the first Day of Silence with over 150 students participating. In 1997, organizers took their effort national and nearly 100 colleges and universities participated. In 2001, GLSEN became the official organizational sponsor with new funding, staff and volunteers.

Has the Day of Silence Project been successful?

In 2002, the Day of Silence became the largest one-day student-led grassroots action on LGBT rights in American history. Since then, the event has grown from 150,000 student participants to an estimated 400,000 students in 2004. GLSEN spokespeople have appeared on national media outlets including CNN and NPR, with extensive local media coverage from coast to coast.

Why do we need a Day of Silence?

GLSEN's 2003 National School Climate Survey found that more than 4 out of 5 LGBT students report verbal, sexual or physical harassment at school and 29% report missing at least a day of school in the past month out of fear for their personal safety. The Day of Silence helps bring us closer to making anti-LGBT bullying, harassment and name-calling unacceptable in America's schools.

Does the work end after the day is over?



DAY of SILENCE



The Day of Silence is one element of a larger effort to create safe schools for all LGBT students.

Many communities, in addition to supporting the Day of Silence, host Breaking The Silence events, rallies, legislative lobby days, performances and more – both on the Day of Silence and all-year round. We are also asking our national leaders to support policies that create safe schools for all. Many communities are asking their local and state leaders to support and implement similar policies.

How do I get started?

Visit www.dayofsilence.org for an organizing manual and information. You should start to plan the event at the beginning of the spring semester. First, you should build a team of people who are passionate about the cause. You may want to organize through an established school group such as a gay-straight alliance (GSA), Amnesty International Club or other student club. Once you build a team, the next step is to create an Action Plan.

What is an Action Plan?

An Action Plan is a way to organize your tasks into a timeline that you can follow to achieve your goals. The Action Plan should address what will get done, when it will get done and who will be responsible for doing it.

What “tasks” do you recommend be part of the Action Plan?

There are many elements to keep in mind: goals and objectives, timelines, committing people to help with planning, reserving space for your day's events, fundraising for resources and guest speakers and exploring procedures for publicity. A more detailed explanation of these tasks and how to go about accomplishing them can be found on our websites at www.dayofsilence.org and www.glsen.org.

Visit the website for more information on getting started.—Ed.

For the latest news, go to www.glsenhudsonvalley.org



GSA NEWS

The GSA at **Ramapo High School** has been blessed with many ninth and tenth graders joining our ranks. We have created a showcase display called the trans umbrella. This is an educational venue whereby faculty and students can understand the various definitions of terms such as cross-dresser, and trans sexual. We are hoping to get a trans person to speak to our GSA as well as the health classes.

-Diane Schneider, Advisor
Ramapo HS GSA

The **Westlake High School** GSA conducted a school-wide Climate Survey in December, and we are now busy preparing for a presentation to the faculty in March. We will present the data from our

survey, and ask all of our teachers and support staff to make their classroom or office a "Safe Space."

-Michael Anderson, Advisor
Westlake High School GSA

Clarkstown South High School in Rockland County has collected clothing for gay youth at the Ali Fornay Center in Manhattan. We are currently making plans for Diversity Day to be held in March, and we will be participating in Day of Silence. This year we will kick off the day, and hopefully generate more interest in it, by having a kick off the night before, with bands and performances by our own students.

-Mimi Goodman, Susan Solar, Co-Advisors to
SAFE(Student Alliance for Equality)



GLSEN Hudson Valley and Center Lane will co-sponsor **GSA Summit 2006** on Saturday, March 25, 2-5 p.m. at the YWCA, 515 North St., White Plains, NY. Some fifty schools in our chapter area are invited to send representatives for this afternoon of socializing and strategic planning. Advisors are welcome too.

Registration costs only \$5 to help defray the cost of the "GLSEN Workbook" that will be given to each GSA participating. Snacks will also be served.

A letter and flyer were mailed in February to all GSAs on our list. Please pre-register no later than March 17 so we can better plan the afternoon. For more information, email glsenhv@aol.com or call 914-962-7888.

For directions to the White Plains YWCA, go to www.ywcawhiteplains.org. Parking is plentiful.

Dear GSA Members and Advisors,

Forming a GSA is hard enough, but what do you do once you have one? There are so many basic problems that arise with the start of a new club, let alone a GSA. Whether the issue is organization, the girl to boy ratio, or a lack of creative and effective activities, communication with other GSAs will help. There is no reason to feel isolated and frustrated when there are numerous GSAs wrestling with the same challenges.

A network of communicating GLBTQI allies sharing their experiences can improve any GSA. Why isolate the alliance to your school when there are so many clubs with the same goals? Come learn from one another through socializing and knowledgeable speakers. Experienced GSA members will facilitate open-ended discussions. Anyone who is interested in sharing their GSA's techniques should contact Peacedrum@aol.com. We want people to get to know each other and hear some fresh ideas.

Come strengthen the alliance on March 25.

Maggie

Maggie Chesnut attends Putnam Valley High School and is on the Westchester Board of Directors of GLSEN Hudson Valley

CHAPTER NEWS

WESTCHESTER Mike Witsch

and Carleen Gilot were guests at the College of New Rochelle on Feb. 27 where they conducted a training about LGBT issues for Resident Assistants.

Maggie Chesnut and Carleen Gilot are planning a GSA Summit to take place on Saturday, March 25 (2-5 p.m.) at the YWCA in White Plains.

We're looking forward to helping Center Lane celebrate its new "digs" on March 1 from 4-6 p.m.. Center Lane is a program of Westchester Jewish Community Services that serves LGBT youth. The new, expanded space is in the WJCS headquarters building at 845 No. Broadway in White Plains.

We anticipate a very active "Day of Silence" on April 26. Students in dozens of high schools are planning to participate. Some will also hold after-school meetings to "break the silence." We're looking forward to a countywide "Breaking the Silence" event that Center Lane is planning after school that day. We're sure it will attract GSAs from all over. It will be held in their new space.

Save the date – Saturday, May 20 – for GLSEN Hudson Valley's Benefit Dinner and Leadership Award presentation. After several fun evenings on land, we're looking into a delightful cruise on the Hudson. Dinner, dancing, awards – and sightseeing! Invitations will be sent to all donors. Are you on our guest list? To be sure, call 914-962-7888 or email glsenhv@aol and add your name.

Look for GLSEN Hudson Valley at Clearwater's Great Hudson River Revival on June 17-18 at Croton Point Park, Croton-on-Hudson NY. We're looking for a few volunteers to set-up an information table during the weekend festivities. In the years we've been invited to participate, we've greeted hundreds of visitors, distributed information, sold educational items, answered questions -- and had lots of fun! Interested in helping out? Contact Mary Jane Karger at 914-962-7888 or email glsenhv@aol.com.

ROCKLAND *At the Common Threads Youth Retreat on Jan. 13-15 at the Stony Point conference center, GLSEN-Rockland's Diane*

Gonzales conducted a workshop about bullying. She sent this report.

This workshop focused on the devastating impact of bullying on youth in school and community settings. It introduced specific techniques to make classroom and other environments inclusive and welcoming to all students, regardless of our differences, especially when it pertains to a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation. The emphasis was on helping to create a classroom environment where everyone feels safe, accepted, and appreciated.

During a discussion of the importance of peer education, I told students they could make a difference in someone else's life and asked them to be cognizant of their every word and action. We engaged in several exercises to heighten the teens' perception of others and themselves and discussed the potential harm of labeling people. Because the social climate for LGBT youth is tough, people have to be willing to speak out on these issues.

High school students in the workshop had a chance to model a lesson they had implemented last year at a local middle school. The same opportunity will be made available this year again to Rockland County high school youth that want to participate in this program.

My advice to the students was to try to create a safe environment by educating the people around you. This can be done in a variety of ways such as faculty training, diversifying the library materials, and creating safe zones in their schools. The main purpose of a Safe Zone program is to visibly mark people and places that are "safe" for LGBT students. This is usually accomplished through a sticker with a pink triangle or some other recognizable LGBT symbol. When students and staff affix stickers to their lockers, desks, backpacks, or office doors, it signifies an affirmation of LGBT people and lets others know that they are a safe person to approach for support or guidance. Teachers could create a more inclusive classroom by simply changing their language in the classroom. If they are less gender specific when talking about romantic situations, it sends the message that they are more accepting of GLBT relationships. If they integrate GLBT examples into their curriculum, it would set a more positive tone of acceptance.

CHAPTER NEWS

ULSTER

Over the winter, the Ulster Sub-chapter of GLSEN Hudson Valley (GLSEN-Ulster) rolled out the "Add A Book" program to the school districts in the County. The program was designed to encourage students to take an active role in making LGBT resources available in their school libraries. Student members of gay-straight alliances were asked to work with the school librarian to survey the LGBT-related books available in their library. Students then chose a book from the GLSEN Booklink that best served their needs, and the sub-chapter donated the book to their library.

Marlboro High School's GSA not only participated in the "Add A Book" program, they have worked collaboratively with the school librarian to establish a "Safe Space" section in their library. Students in the GSA reviewed plans for the identification of books and are continuing to ensure that the books in the "Safe Space" reflect the diversity of their student body.

Highland High School's GSA is excited to be taking their No-Name-Calling-Week (NNCW) to the next level this year. They postponed their NNCW to coincide with a presentation to students and faculty by Jim Howe, the author of **The Misfits**, the novel that inspired NNCW. Following his presentation, they kicked-off a NNCW in the district. This is Highland's second year participating in NNCW.

A No-Name-Calling workshop by Rob Conlon at the Taconic Region PTA conference in the fall inspired PTAs around the Mid-Hudson Valley to hold workshops in their home districts. On February 13th, Rob conducted a workshop in Dutchess County at Arlington High School for over 50 parents, teachers, and administrators from every grade level in the district. Additional presentations are being planned for districts in Ulster County.

Looking ahead to spring, GLSEN-Ulster will be holding this year's second GSA Summit on Saturday March 25th at the YMCA in Kingston. The summit will help GSAs plan activities for this year's Day of Silence.

GLSEN-Ulster also will be participating in the 2nd annual New Paltz Pride March on June 4th.

Finally, GLSEN-Ulster is helping with the establishment of the Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center, ensuring that the Center has a strong youth component. The Center, which will likely be housed in Kingston, is seeking membership from Ulster and the surrounding Counties and promises to provide a safe space in the community for LGBT youth.

Anyone interested in volunteering or learning more about GLSEN-Ulster's activities can call Rob Conlon at 845-795-5201.

Excerpted from "Speaker: Bullying Bullies Role of Entire Community" by Joe Stampfel, VoiceLedger.com, Feb. 16, 2006

Arlington High School hosted a parent education workshop to help parents learn about the impact of bullying in the school system and how to prevent it. Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network co-chairman Rob Conlon spoke to an audience of about 50 people. "Schools have an educational and social responsibility to their students," said Conlon. "All students have the right to an education that is free of harassment," he said.

"Victims of bullying have problems with self esteem, anxiety and depression," said Conlon, noting "All of these things can have an impact on the rest of our lives." Conlon suggested that bullying not be ignored. He said many people pretend not to hear or choose not to do anything about it.

He urged people to begin taking action... "The number one change you can make is to intervene," he said. "If you are unable change your school, take the time to change something at home. Talk to your children."

Conlon also described a few steps parents might consider taking to help raise awareness and promote change within other parents. Reviewing school policies with administrators, surveying the school, creating a supportive environment at home, and participating in planning interventions were among the actions he said could make a difference in a child's quality of education.

The workshop was hosted by the Taconic Region Parent Teacher Association.

MY SON, FIRST AND FOREMOST By Bev Weiner

A few years ago, I watched the TV movie of the story of Matthew Shephard. Needless to say, there were many lessons to be learned from the sad and disturbing events that led to this boy's horrific murder. It was one of the "smaller" moments, however that I found to be most profound.

During a scene when reporters were swarming the courthouse and Matthew's parents emerged, a reporter could be heard shouting, "There is the father of the gay son." As Matthew's father stood at a microphone, he began his statement with the following: "Matthew was NOT my gay son. Matthew was my SON, who happened to be gay."

This has impacted me, as the mother of a son, who also happens to be gay, enormously. When your child comes out to you, he doesn't change from your child to your gay child. Nor does your sister, or friend, or uncle, or teacher, or hairdresser, or doctor. It would never occur to me to refer to my other child as my straight daughter! There are many ways to advocate for the LGBTQ community. Point out the inequities that exist and

the bias. Stand up, speak out, vote, give money, but don't define them by what their orientation happens to be.

My son is a decent, caring human being. He is of moral character, respectful and humble. He has many traits to be proud of and some that need a bit of work. And, oh, by the way, he happens to be gay.

When your child comes out to you, he doesn't change from your child to your gay child. Nor does your sister, or friend, or uncle, or teacher, or hairdresser, or doctor.

Bev Weiner is on the Westchester Board of Directors of GLSEN Hudson Valley.

TEACHER UNION TO HOST APRIL 5 CONFERENCE By Mandy Gersten

A ONE-DAY WORKSHOP

SAFETY FOR ALL:
GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL,
TRANSGENDERED, AND QUESTIONING YOUTH

APRIL 5
2006
- LATHAM, NEW YORK -
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

- Sponsored by -
NYSUT
New York State United Teachers
SAANY
Student Support Services Center
Nothing is more ready to learn!

New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) is hosting a conference - "Safety for All: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth," on Wednesday, April 5, 2006 at its headquarters in Latham. The keynote speaker is Mitch Hahn from GLSEN's New York Capital region.

The full-day conference is sponsored by NYSUT along with the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANY) and the Student Support Services Center.

Visit nysut.org for a brochure. For more information, contact Theresa Manny at NYSUT, 800-342-9810, ext. 6621 or write to her at NYSUT, 800 Troy-Schenectady Rd., Latham NY 12210. Register no later than March 31st.

Mandy Gersten teaches in Bronxville Schools and is active in NYSUT.

DASA DASHED? By Michael Witsch

The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) is now stalled in the legislature, and passage this election year is doubtful. Nevertheless, members of the Dignity Coalition – over 170 members, including GLSEN Hudson Valley -- are determined to revive the discussion. The Assembly has already passed A.9491 but won't move until the Senate approves a similar bill.

The coalition is urging that both houses work together to pass DASA this year. This is the year! New York State needs to protect all students from bias harassment and bullying!

When enacted, DASA will protect all New York's students from abuse in school based on race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender (including gender identity and expression), sexual orientation, and disability.

The Dignity for All Students Act (A.4963/ S.1454) has passed the Assembly for over three years now by overwhelming, bipartisan majorities. The Senate has responded with the Schools as Safe Harbors Act (S.4023), a bill which is lacking in a number of significant ways.

One deficiency appears to be "gender identity or expression." The language is included in the Assembly bill as well as in the Senate minority's version of S.1454. However, the majority in the Senate appears "reluctant" to include it.

To Dignity Coalition members, the language is

essential because it helps protect those students who are not "gay or lesbian" but whose gender identity or expression do not match with that assigned for their physical sex.

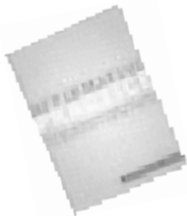
The coalition is urging that both houses work together to pass DASA this year. This is the year! New York State needs to protect all students from bias harassment and bullying!

The coalition wants supporters of DASA to contact their representatives in Albany to urge cooperation and passage this year. The New York State Pride Agenda makes this easy. Visit their website – prideagenda.org and click on "Legislative Action Center." You'll quickly find contact information for your assemblyperson and senator, and just as fast, you can compose and send your message.

For the latest news about DASA, contact Nora Yates at the Empire State Pride Agenda, 212-627-0305.

Michael Witsch is a retired teacher and the editor of this newsletter. Parts of this article from

LIBRARY CORNER



Affirmative Practice, Understanding and Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons by Ski Hunter and Jane C. Hickerson, NASW Press, Washington, DC, 2003.

A textbook for students and a resource for practitioners in the field. The authors thoroughly examine LGBT issues from youth through older adulthood, capturing the complexity of current issues pertaining to affirmative practice with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons.

"The Principles of Youth," DVD – from the Jan. 2006 TV series "In the Life."

This episode is dedicated entirely to stories of LGBT youth, giving voice to an often unheard and overlooked population.



These are two of the 1200+ items in our lending library. Visit our website for a complete list. -Ed.

HEALING THE HURT / PRIDEWORKS SUCCEEDS

By Laura Newman



The energy and movement of progress for LGBT students was instantly recognizable at the 7th annual Healing the Hurt Conference held on November 13, 2005. As

hundreds of students, educators and youth workers filled the main hall of the Westchester County Center, it was clear that things are happening in our area's schools.



Andy Spano, Kevin Jennings, MaryJane Karger

Over 40 school districts from Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange, and Ulster Counties were represented with some sending busloads of students to the conference and many middle school students attending.

A few significant changes were made this year including moving the conference to the Westchester County Center to accommodate over 600 attendees. In addition, the conference launched a new theme: "PrideWorks for LGBT Youth" to project a more positive message than the original name. Because of the large response from schools in the past few years, the conference also focused heavily on educational issues and activism for students.

The day started with a wonderful keynote speech on LGBT history presented by Kevin Jennings, Executive Director of GLSEN. Then participants chose from over 25 workshop sessions during which they heard from experts, viewed videos, and participated in discussions. Many workshops were specifically designed for sharing experiences and learning from each other. During one of those sessions, a student shared this classroom incident that resulted in an audible gasp from the

audience:

"This kid called my friend a stupid faggot in class one day and the teacher said: 'We don't use the word stupid in this classroom'."

For the many non-LGBT people attending the conference, stories like this really helped them understand the difficulties LGBT students face on a daily basis. As one GSA Advisor wrote on the evaluation form: "The personal experiences are amazing!"

At the end of the day, there were many, many positive comments from people who attended the conference, and it was clear that they felt energized by the experience. The evaluation results are still being compiled but a first glance shows that the conference met its goals to educate participants on LGBT youth issues and give them tools to address those issues in their communities. One school board member who has attended the last five conferences said: "I always learn something new and valuable."

The conference planning committee will be looking at the suggestions made by attendees and working on an even bigger, even better 8th conference scheduled for November 1, 2006. One thing to look forward to will definitely be an increase in youth presenters and opportunities for youth voices to be heard.



John Jay High School students

Laura Newman is Westchester County's LGBT Community Liaison and a member of the PrideWorks for LGBT Youth planning committee.

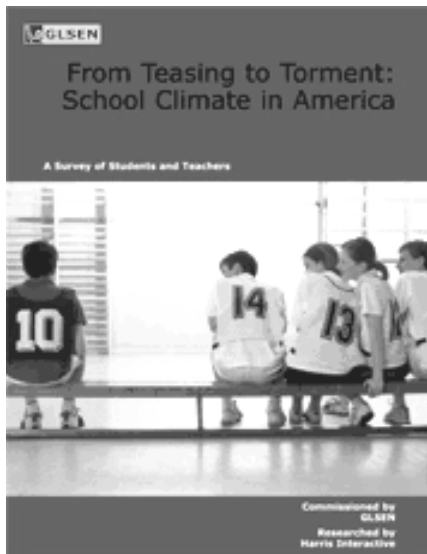
FROM TEASING TO TORMENT - Study Results Demonstrate the Severity of Bullying and Harassment in NY Schools

GLSEN has released "From Teasing to Torment: A Profile of School Climate in New York," which provides a rare look into student experiences with bullying and harassment, and their attitudes about this serious problem in New York schools. The results are based on students in New York State who were surveyed as part of a national study of secondary school students and teachers conducted by Harris Interactive(R).

"Bullying and harassment are clearly significant issues in New York schools," said Keith Powell, chair of GLSEN Rochester. "It is time that parents, teachers, students, school administrators and legislators work together to make sure schools are safer for *all* students."

Results from the survey demonstrate that bullying is far too common in New York schools:

- More than one-third (39%) of New York students reported that bullying, name-calling, and harassment is a serious problem in school.
- The most common cause of harassment was because of physical appearance -- 65% reported people at their schools were harassed because of their looks or body size.
- More than five out of ten (51%) reported that students were harassed because they were or were perceived to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual -- even as only 5% identified as being so.
- Surprisingly, many students heard biased language from school staff. Nineteen percent (19%) of students heard sexist remarks, 14% heard racist remarks, and 13% heard homophobic remarks from school staff.



- A majority (60%) of students who experienced harassment or assault at school did not report it to a teacher, principal or other school staff person. Of those that *did* report incidents, only 37% reported that some immediate action was taken by school staff to address the situation.

Less than half (41%) of New York students reported that they were protected by a school anti-harassment policy that specifically mentioned sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Almost one-third (29%) were not sure if their school provided any anti-harassment protections at all.

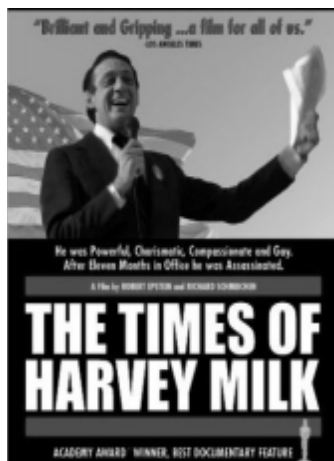
"Everyone wants their children to go to school and feel safe," said Kevin Jennings, Founder and Executive Director of GLSEN. "In New York City, where I live, there are protections for all students; unfortunately that is not the case for the entire state. Training teachers on how to assess and respond to incidents of verbal and physical harassment and implementing state-level safe school legislation with specific categories is the best way to ensure New York's schools are safe for *all* students."

Harris Interactive(R) conducted the online study on behalf of GLSEN between January 13 and 31, 2005. A total of 3,450 U.S. public and private/parochial students ages 13 to 18 were surveyed. Within this sample, an oversample of students was drawn from several states including New York. A total of 210 respondents attended schools in New York at the time of the survey.

Read the full "From Teasing to Torment" report, including statistics from other states, at glsen.org

"Truth has the power to dispel the darkness of ignorance - just as a candle has the power to light a cave that has been dark for a million years."

OUT AT THE MOVIES—JACOB BURNS FILM CENTER



JBFC in Pleasantville will present its 3rd annual LGBT film series April 21-May 2.

GLSEN Hudson Valley previewed one film – “The Times of Harvey Milk,” that will be shown April 24 and 29.

JBFC has arranged a special showing and guest speaker for high school students on Mon. April 24 at noon.

For more information and reservations, please call Emily Keating, Associate Director of Education for the Jacob Burns Film Center, at 914-773-7663 x17.

In 1978, Harvey Milk was elected to the San Francisco City Council, becoming a standard-bearer for his Castro district constituents and the first openly gay person to gain public office in California. A year later, Milk and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone were brutally murdered by former supervisor Dan White. Milk's life leading up to his election, his successful efforts to politically represent San Francisco's gay community, and the city's reaction to the assassinations are documented with extensive news film and personal recollections.

The guest speaker for the April 24 screenings at noon and 6:30 p.m. is David Mensah, Exec. Director of the Hetrick-Martin Institute, home of the Harvey Milk High School in New York City which serves at-risk youth, particularly lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning youth.

BOOK REVIEW

Q: What do students learn about homosexuality in elementary school and high school?

A: Students learn plenty...almost all of it informally, and nearly all of it bad. The first lesson occurs when one child calls another a fag in the elementary school cafeteria, and the lessons continue on through high school, when a group of students decides to torment a theater teacher they think is gay.

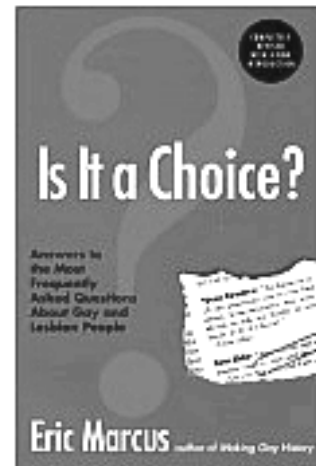
That question and part answer from Eric Marcus's book, **Is It A Choice?, Answers to 300 of the Most Frequently Asked Questions About Gay and Lesbian People**, 3rd edition (1999 Harper San Francisco).

Here's a practical guide for parents, teachers, counselors, and students. Marcus answers all sorts of questions, from the basics – “How do you know if you're gay or lesbian?,” to self-discovery – “What's it like for gay and lesbian kids in high school?” and from work issues – “Should an openly gay teacher be allowed to teach?” to religion – “What do different religions say about gay men and lesbians?” Other questions are grouped into chapters like Family and Children, Socializing and Friends, and The Mass Media.

Marcus says that while many things have changed since he wrote the book, he keeps hearing the same questions from audiences. That proves, he argues, that we haven't done enough to educate about same-sex attraction.

This reviewer borrowed the book from the Chappaqua Public Library via the Westchester Library System. A sticker inside explains the book is part of the “Close the Book on Hate” library donated in honor of a young girl on her Bat-Mitzvah in 2004. What a wonderful gift!

-MW



If you come across a book, video, or magazine article you'd like to recommend to our readers, please contact glsenhv@aol.com or call 914-962-7888. To see what's in our own lending library, visit www.glsenhudsonvalley.org - Ed.

The 2006 LEADERSHIP AWARD Nominees Are....

GLSEN-Hudson Valley needs your help to identify people - young and old, groups, or community organizations in our area who have done outstanding work supporting LGBT youth. We invite you to submit a nomination(s) and tell us about the great work being done. Our **2006 Leadership Awards** will be presented during our annual Benefit on May 20, 2006.

Fill out the nomination form and attach specifics on how the nominee has worked to change the community or school on behalf of LGBT youth. If you are nominating yourself, please include at least one letter of recommendation.

GLSEN 2006 LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINATION FORM



NOMINEE: _____
Address _____
Telephone _____
Email _____

PLEASE INDICATE: STUDENT EDUCATOR OTHER _____

PLEASE ATTACH AN EXPLANATION OF WHY THIS NOMINEE SHOULD RECEIVE A GLSEN HUDSON VALLEY LEADERSHIP AWARD.

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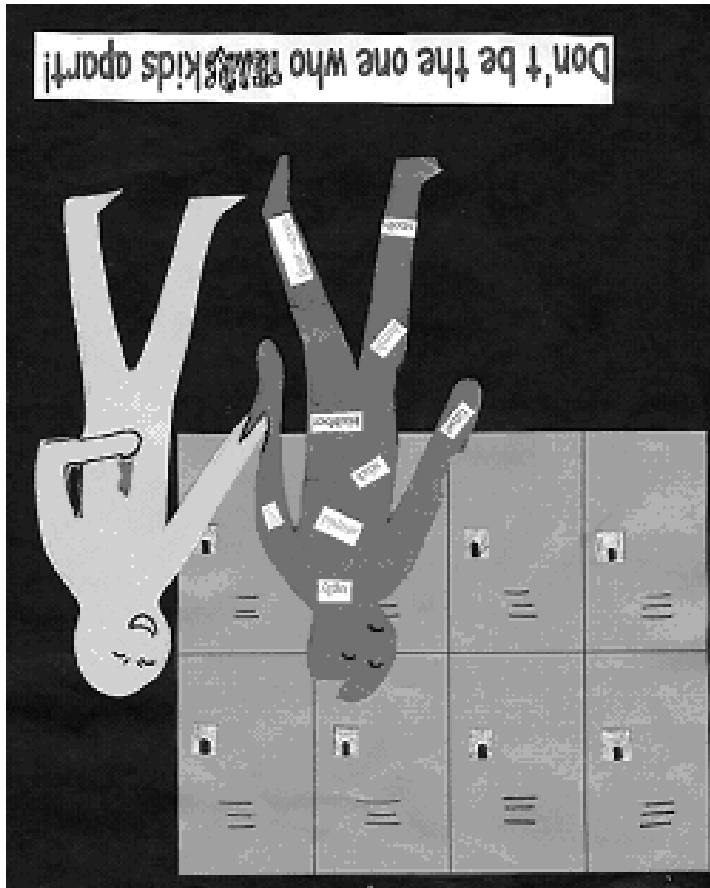
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