

Gay-Straight Alliance: Leadership Guide
East Chapel Hill High School
June 2007

The First Meeting:

At the first meeting, ask for ideas about projects for this year. Ask the group about ideas such as the following:

- Teacher Training
- Socials/Dances
- Club Teeshirts

Make sure you have (and keep) a list of ideas that the group likes and continue to work on them throughout the year. Also be sure to introduce members to the Incident Book and instruct them to record any events they experience or witness.

Incident Book:

Create a binder with blank pages in which students and teachers can record any incidents of harassment they experience or witness.

Pride (Saturday, September 29th, 2007):

I suggest buying a package of poster boards and having the group meet after school to make signs. Try to organize rides so that every member can attend. Consider having a large banner made to march with. Plan to march with iNSIDEoUT (with the other triangle GSAs), and agree to meet at the iNSIDEoUT booth at least 30 minutes before the march starts.

www.ncpride.org

Fundraisers

Keep collected cash in a safe place in your home. Here are some fundraising ideas:

- Sell coffee in the morning---very popular
- Bake Sale
- Sell T-shirts

Socials

It is very difficult for groups to decide exactly what kind of social they want. Socials can be held in a public place or at a member's house. If you are not meeting at a café or restaurant, have members sign up to bring different snacks. Plan socials at least 2 weeks in advance and remind members about it as much as possible. Be sure to e-mail directions to the group.

Here are some ideas:

- Movie Night

Suggest a movie night to the group and ask members to suggest movies. The movie must be PG-13, PG, or G in order to be an *official* club social (unless all parents sign permission slips allowing their kids to attend). However, if the group prefers an R-rated title, simply call the social a “private party to which every single member of GSA is coincidentally invited”.

- Dances

A dance can be held easily at a member’s house. Tell all members to bring their favorite CDs. Buy a strobe light or disco ball to enhance the mood.

Faculty Training:

Faculty trainings are a tradition at our school. Be sure to prepare for this training well in advance. Here is a step-by-step guide:

1. Select an upcoming teacher workday, a time, and a location. If you choose the black box or the auditorium, check with the drama department.
2. Check the date with the principal. If he or she approves, ask him to send out a faculty-wide announcement.
3. Select 2 issues to focus on (e.g. harassment, student mental health, students coming out), a hands-on activity, and an introduction activity. The GLSEN lunchbox kit is very helpful.
4. Make a list of items needed for the training. Such items might include nametags, pens, pastry snacks, vegetable plate, coffee, other beverages. Starbucks and Caribou Coffee are often willing to donate coffee.
5. Assign specific members to bring items and do each presentation.
6. Have a meeting outside of school to practice the presentations.
7. Photocopy the agenda and any papers needed during the training.
8. Plan to meet at least 30 minutes before the training to set up.

Club Teeshirts:

Have a brainstorming meeting; bring in markers and copy paper and have members draw their ideas for teeshirt design. At the next meeting, have all members vote for their favorite design. The winning design should be scanned or recreated by a design-savvy member as a .jpeg file. Next, go to www.cafepress.com and create an account.

Upload the design and use it to create apparel. Be sure to delete last year’s design. As a leader, you should immediately order your own teeshirt and wear it to meetings, reminding other members to order their own.

Information Sessions

Information sessions are a good way to educate the group. Here are some examples:

- Minding Your Money:

Some businesses and charities are very LGBT-friendly, while others are not. Supporting LGBT-friendly businesses CAN make a difference.

Some LGBT-Friendly Businesses:

- AT&T

- Best Buy
- Coca-Cola
- Dell, Inc.
- Abercrombie & Fitch
- ALLTELL
- Applebee's
- Avon
- Barnes & Noble
- Bellsouth
- Blockbuster
- Cambell's Soup
- Cingular
- Domino's Pizza
- Food Lion
- Gateway
- Ford Motors
- General Electric
- GlaxoSmithKline
- The Gap
- Heinz
- Google
- Hilton Hotels
- Home Depot
- J.C. Penney
- Levi Strauss
- Mastercard
- Mattell
- McDonald's
- Microsoft
- Men's Warehouse
- Nike
- Nokia
- Nordstrom
- Pepsi
- Pillsbury
- Reebok
- Sara Lee
- Shell Oil
- Staples
- Starbucks
- Target
- Time Warner
- Toys 'R' Us
- Toyota
- Verizon
- Walt Disney

- Wachovia
- Wal-Mart
- Whole Foods
- Yahoo!

Some NOT Gay-Friendly Businesses

- BMW
- Urban Outfitters
- The Duck Shop (Local)

- Coming Out:

The decision to come out of the closet is very difficult. In some cases, such as when coming out could alienate close family members, coming out can be a dangerous decision. The following link has good advice about coming out to one's parents: http://www.outproud.org/brochure_coming_out.html Here are some tips for coming out:

- Do not let it slip out in conversation. Be very clear.
- Do not come out in a moving vehicle.
- If the person avoids you or seems irritable, try not to be hurt. The person will probably come to accept you eventually; he or she may be angry that you did not talk about it before.

- The Transgendered Community:

Ideally, this workshop should be held on or near Transgendered Day of Remembrance in November; iNSIDEoUT (iNSIDEoUT180.org) will probably distribute stickers and armbands. Transgendered people are often associated with gays and lesbians. Their way of life is often difficult for people to understand. Going through the following vocabulary may help:

- **Sex:** One's chromosomal (XX or XY) sex or physical sex (determined by one's genitals); usually either male or female.
- **Gender:** One's perception and expression of being male, female, or other.
- **Intersex:** An individual who is born with both or neither male and/or female genitalia.
- **Transgender:** Refers to any individual that does not follow society's expectations of his or her sex.
- **Transsexual:** An individual who has undergone sexual reassignment surgery to transform their body into the opposite sex.
- **Transvestite:** A person who dresses as the opposite gender; this can include drag queens and drag kings who cross-dress to perform, or those who dress as the opposite sex in their daily lives.
- **Gender Queer:** One who identifies as neither male nor female.

- Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is a problem often overlooked among the LGBT community. However, domestic abuse in same-sex relationships is disturbingly common. Anyone in an abusive relationship **MUST** leave the relationship **IMMEDIATELY**. Abuse includes hitting, kicking, pushing, threats, strangulation, and abusive language. Abuse usually follows a pattern known as the "cycle of violence," in which a phase of tension precedes abuse, which is followed by a "honeymoon

- phase,” during which the abusive partner appears extremely apologetic and affectionate. However, the cycle repeats itself.
- **Safe Sex**
It is important for teenagers to be aware of safe sexual practices, regardless of their sexual orientation. Be sure to pick up a few free dental dams, rubber gloves, condoms, and packets of lubricating jelly at Pride to use as props.
 - *Lesbian Sex*
Lesbian sex takes a variety of forms, including oral sex, anal sex, heavy petting, and genital-on-genital rubbing. Many believe that lesbian sex is safe, because it involves little penetration, but this is not true. Any disease that can be spread through heterosexual sex can also be spread through lesbian sex.
 - ❖ Rubber gloves can be worn during vaginal and anal penetration.
 - ❖ Dental dams, which are thin pieces of plastic, should be held over the vulva or anus during oral sex. If no dental dam is available, use NON-MICROWAVEABLE PLASTIC WRAP (microwaveable plastic wrap has pores large enough for an HIV virus to pass through). Condoms can also be cut to form makeshift dental dams.
 - ❖ Cover sex toys with condoms, and change the condoms while exchanging them with your partner.
 - *Gay Sex*
Condoms should be worn during oral and anal sex. During anal sex, be sure to use oil-free lubrication jelly (greasy lubes can break condoms). It is important to be gentle, because the thin anal wall can be torn easily, leading to infection and a higher risk of disease transmission.
 - **Day Of Silence (April 25, 2008)**
On the Day of Silence, LGBT people and their allies will remain silent to represent the silence that many are forced to keep regarding their sexuality and gender identity. 1 week before Day of Silence, print and distribute explanation cards (available here <http://www.dayofsilence.org/downloads/oresources1.php>). At the end of the day, the GSA or a regional organization should hold an event where participants can discuss their experiences.

Team-Building Activities

These activities are great ways to kill time and get to know each other.

- **Check-In/Check-Out**
Before and after each meeting, the group gathers in a circle. Each person takes turns sharing his or her thoughts.
- **Vampire**
All members draw slips of paper out of a hat. One slip of paper will say, “Vampire” on it. Everyone will wander about the room. When 2 people meet, each MUST say something, unless that person is the vampire. When a member meets the vampire, he or she becomes a vampire as well. The game continues until all members are vampires.
- **Balloon Name Game**

Inflate several balloons. All members will sit in a circle and toss one balloon around the circle. Players may not toss the balloon to the people immediately next to them. Before tossing the balloon, the player will say the name of the person he or she is tossing the balloon to. Once everyone gets the hang of this, add another balloon to the circle.

- Step Back

This game helps build awareness of the discrimination at this school. All members will stand in a straight line in the middle of the room. All players must refrain from comment during the activity. Read the following questions, pausing after each one to give a chance for members to look around.

1. If you have ever heard someone being called a homophobic slur such as 'fag' or 'dyke,' please step forward.
2. If you have ever been called a homophobic slur such as 'fag' or 'dyke,' please step forward.
3. If you know your parent(s) would love and support you regardless of your sexual orientation, please step back.
4. If you have ever lost a friend because of your sexual orientation, please step forward.
5. If you have ever been barred from an activity because of your sexual orientation, please step forward.
6. If your parent(s) know about your sexual orientation, please step back.
7. If you have ever heard someone say, "that's so gay," please step forward.
8. If you have ever received physical violence due to your sexual orientation, please step forward.
9. If you have ever been harassed because one of your friends is gay, please step forward.