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## OC GSA Gears Up for Kick-Ass Day of Silence

Mar. 19, 2010 ? Daniel

It's that time of the year again!  
What time you ask?

Time to plan and hold the annual [Day of Silence](#) <sup>[1]</sup> at your school!

Every year in the spring, GSAs across the country take a vow of silence to recognize and protest the silence that LGBT people face each day. GSAs in California and throughout the United States have organized around GLSEN'S Day of Silence as a way of raising awareness and fighting homophobia and transphobia in their schools.

To help GSA activists plan the best possible Day of Silence on April 16, 2010, we decided to go to the experts themselves ? GSA activists like you!

We caught up with the busy leaders of the GSA at Garden Grove High School (GGHS) in Orange County and picked their brains on what makes a truly successful Day of Silence. They were able to share what they've got planned for this year and how they went about making it work.

Gianna Mocerocco, an officer of the GSA, explained their ambitious plans, not just for the Day of Silence, but also for the whole week leading up to it. Gianna said, "We have decided to call the week leading up to the Day of Silence *Support Love Week*. We are going to publicize *Support Love Week* two weeks prior to it ? in early April- with flyers. The goal is to get students educated, motivated, and participating to help spread knowledge about harassment and discrimination against LGBT people around the whole school."

Bay Nguyen, GSA President, went on to describe the various activities they have planned throughout the week. Bay explained that, "Monday is "Wear Your Support Love T-Shirt." Tuesday, we're going to show a video that explains how anti-LGBT slurs make schools unsafe for all students. We're going to show it during our regular GSA meeting. Wednesday is the Club Food Fair (a.k.a. "support GSA by buying our food?"). This will help us raise money for our events next year. Thursday is "Stop A Slur Day" where the GSA challenges all students to not say any slurs and to check other people's use of slurs for a day. Lastly, Friday is the Day of Silence.

Students will be taking the vow or helping support those that are. We'll also have a Breaking the Silence Rally after school.

In order to increase the number of people participating in the Day of Silence, Garden Grove High's GSA plans on making and passing out two different types of ribbons. Bay explained that the purpose of the ribbons was to show who was actually taking the vow of silence and who was supporting it as a Speaking Ally. Bay said, "The week before *Support Love Week*, the GSA is going to prepare orange and yellow ribbons to pass out during lunch on the days leading up to the Day of Silence. The orange ribbon signifies that you're taking a vow of silence and the yellow ribbon signifies that you support the purpose of Day of Silence but are not taking a vow of silence. Along with ribbons we plan on passing out additional resources such as an informational sheet about DOS and ways to get more involved."

Having many ways for students at your school to support the Day of Silence is a good way to increase the number of people participating. Having Speaking Allies who can talk during the day and explain what it's all about can really help you get your message across and make the Day of Silence have a deeper impact at your school.

We next asked Bay and Gianna about how they've worked with their administration to get such an ambitious Day of Silence planned. Bay responded, "Our school's administration helps our planning process by approving the event details to make sure everything will go smoothly. The GSA notifies teachers of the Day of Silence and that some students will take a vow of silence. However, we also make it clear that the GSA doesn't encourage students to not participate during class, and that they risk lowering their grades. By reaching out to teachers with information beforehand we hope that most, if not all, of the teachers are supportive and understanding."

Reaching out to teachers and administrators ahead of time is critical to having a kick-ass Day of Silence. Teachers and administrators like to know what's going on at school, and the more you communicate with them, the more at ease you can put them. Sharing information with teachers and administrators weeks before your Day of Silence also helps to clear up any rumors or wrong information that they might have about the event.

What also helped Bay and Gianna in organizing such a jam-packed week of events was the coalition they built with a human rights club at their school, called BRIDGES. Gianna said of their involvement, "The BRIDGES program is immensely supportive and has offered to help us carry out *Support Love Week* with volunteers to pass out ribbons and helping publicize."

At Garden Grove High, BRIDGES is a very popular club and respected by teachers, administrators and students alike. By getting that club to help with *Support Love Week* and the Day of Silence, the GSA was able to gain valuable allies that can encourage more of the school to respect and support the Day of Silence.

Gianna and Bay also shared the importance of educating fellow students about what the Day of Silence is and what it isn't. The Garden Grove High GSA has been helped by the fact that they have been holding the event for years now. Gianna explained that, "The Day of Silence has

become a tradition at GGHS, so most students are talking about it by the time April rolls around. Additionally, Bay and Gianna also plan on heavily promoting the day along with their *Support Love Week* throughout the school. Bay described that, "We're going to put flyers in classrooms and hallways; announcements on the school intercom; classroom announcements by individual GSA members; word of mouth; information in teachers' mailboxes to share with students. We do everything we can so everyone at our school knows what we're doing and why we're doing it."

By thinking ahead, making coalitions with other student groups, communicating with their teachers and administrators, and being creative with how they do the Day of Silence, Garden Grove High's GSA has ready for a fierce Day of Silence that will educate their school about the daily struggles LGBTQ students go through in our nation's schools.

For more ideas on how to plan a kick-ass Day of Silence check out our Day of Silence Resource Guide: <http://gsanetwork.org/dayofsilence> [1]

You can also contact your local Program Coordinator for support and ideas. They are there to help you!

Central Valley ? Julia Valle, [julia@gsanetwork.org](mailto:julia@gsanetwork.org) [2] or 559.268.2780

NorCal ? Kiely Hosmon, [kiely@gsanetwork.org](mailto:kiely@gsanetwork.org) [3] or 415.552.4229

SoCal ? Daniel Solis, [daniel@gsanetwork.org](mailto:daniel@gsanetwork.org) [4] or 213.482.4021

And be sure to register your event with <http://www.dayofsilence.org> [5] where you can also get more ideas to help you plan Day of Silence.

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#### Links

[1] <http://gsanetwork.org/dayofsilence>

[2] <mailto:julia@gsanetwork.org>

[3] <mailto:kiely@gsanetwork.org>

[4] <mailto:daniel@gsanetwork.org>

[5] <http://www.dayofsilence.org>