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[Home](#) > Taking it to the Streets! GSAs Celebrate LGBT Pride Across California

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During the month of June, GSA activists took to the streets of California's cities, towns and communities to celebrate 40+ years of the LGBT civil rights movement. Forty-one years ago, on June 28, 1969, queer youth, drag queens, and transgender folks fought back against a police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a queer bar in New York City. For three days afterwards, the LGBT community of New York City rioted against the long-standing homophobia and transphobia they faced everyday. These riots came to be known as the Stonewall Riots and are considered the start of the modern LGBT civil rights movement. A year later, Pride marches were organized across the country to celebrate the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots and to show that the LGBT community would never go back into the closet.

GSA Network organized GSA contingents to march in Pride parades in **Fresno, Los Angeles, and San Francisco**. ([click here](#) ^[1] to see photos from the different pride celebrations)

On June 6th, with record-breaking 95 degree weather, the Central Valley came together to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Fresno's Pride Parade in downtown Fresno. GSA Network marched along with youth from Community Link, a local support group fro LGBTQ youth. Amazing youth leaders from GSAs throughout the Central Valley marched down Olive Street and helped collect donations for Fresno's annual Gay Prom.



Even though it is one of the smallest Pride celebrations throughout California, it is one of the biggest events for the Central Valley 's LGBT community, as it creates queer visibility in one of

the most conservative areas of California.

Justin Kamimoto, President of the Clovis North High GSA, shared with us what Fresno Pride meant to him. Justin said, **?Pride for me was a once in a lifetime opportunity that really showed how strong of a bond the LGBTQ community has for one another. When everyone comes together and supports each other on one of the hottest days in Fresno, you know something is working right!?**



GSA youth from all over Southern California gathered in Los Angeles on June 13th to march in the 40th LA Pride

Parade. GSA Network, in collaboration with other community groups, brought together over 250 youth from as far away as Sun Valley, Murrieta, Lancaster, Santa Ana and San Bernardino, who came together to show their pride and to call for safe schools for all students. The organizers of LA Pride also provided free tickets to the Pride Festival afterwards for all GSA activists who attended.

Temple City High GSA President Claudia Chen shared her reasons for attending LA Pride this year. She said, **?I went to LA Pride because I wanted to come out to support everyone who's ever done something to stand up for themselves and the LGBTQ community. LA Pride is also a protest in and of itself against all the discrimination we face. It is a day to really celebrate how much progress we've made throughout the years.?**

On Sunday, June 27th queer and straight youth came together to celebrate [San Francisco LGBT Pride](#) [2], one of the largest Pride celebrations in the world. GSA Network joined the parade with a large contingent of loud and boisterous youth who chanted about the importance of safe schools as they marched down Market Street. Syd Salsman of Acalanes High School felt that, **?? marching in the parade made me feel like there were many other people out there willing to fight for what is right in the world. Particularly, the older people who cheered when we went past made me feel like the world has changed and is changing for the better.?**



Whether in Fresno, Los Angeles or San Francisco, all of these young people are working hard to fight homophobia and transphobia in their schools and bring to light the issues facing LGBT youth in all our communities. By being a part of Pride parades throughout California, these GSA activists are showing that LGBTQ youth will not be silent on the sidelines, but rather lead the fight for full equality everyday. As Julie LaClair, a senior from Oak Grove High School believes, **?Marching in the parade is really liberating. When I was marching I felt that I was being appreciated and encouraged to do more for my LGBTQQI community.?** This feeling is true for all GSA activists no matter where they are.

Marching in Pride parades is just the beginning of what these youth are doing for their communities! Youth are organizing campaigns on their campuses, engaging in days of action, getting trained in political education, and educating their peers, teachers, administrators and parents about the importance of safer schools for LGBTQ students. Pride is a way for these young people to gain validation and to literally hear people cheering them on for their fight to create safer schools! [See you on the streets next Pride](#) ^[1]!

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Links

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

[2] <http://gsanetwork.org/news/spotlight/gsas-celebrate-lgbt-pride-2010>