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Make Your School Better Now through an Anti-Slur Campaign

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Have you wondered what it takes to make your school safer and more accepting for LGBTQ students?

Has your GSA done the Day of Silence every year and the teachers in your school still don't stop students from using anti-LGBT slurs in class?

Are you out of ideas on how your GSA can educate other students on why it's such a problem to say, "That's so gay"?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you need an Anti-Slur Campaign!

But wait, what's a campaign?

A campaign is a long-term planned out effort to reach a goal using lots of different and creative ways to get to that goal. An Anti-Slur campaign involves various ways (or tactics) to change your school and stop slurs from being used. GSA Network staff can visit your GSA and help you plan your campaign for the year. We even bring pizza! Just contact your local staff and we'll schedule a training at your school!

To get a better idea of what an Anti-Slur Campaign is, how it works and what tactics you can use, we asked some GSAs that are doing Anti-Slur Campaigns this year to share their ideas and experiences and answer some of the common questions people ask about Anti-Slur Campaigns.

Why is your GSA organizing an Anti-Slur Campaign?

? My GSA is organizing an Anti-Slur Campaign because there is a lot of homophobic and transphobic language on campus. These terms discriminate against the LGBTQ and ally community by saying that being straight is better than being gay. "Damn straight" is used at school to describe something good or positive, while "that's so gay" refers to something that people don't like or thought was stupid. I want to teach my school that "gay" is not a synonym for "stupid"!

- Claudia Chen, GSA President Temple City High

? My GSA is organizing an Anti-Slur Campaign because the students at school use the slurs all too often and don't have any idea of the kind of hurt they are spreading in our school. Our goal is to have the student body understand the hurtful power behind the slurs and whom they are affecting. With education, they can stop and think before they speak, so they can really understand what each slur they are using means. We want the student body to have a better understanding of the LGBT community and know that we aren't backing down.

- Krista Blevins, GSA President Yucca Valley High

? We are troubled by the recent suicides and are looking to prevent any tragic events happening in our school. That is why we are starting an Anti-Slur Campaign that will make a lasting change in the climate of my school to decrease and minimize the use of offensive slurs against LGBT people. We want to break past people's idea of what the traditional form of bullying is and show that it comes in all forms and to look out for it, because you may not even realize it's happening.

- Emily Coffin, GSA Co-President Saugus High

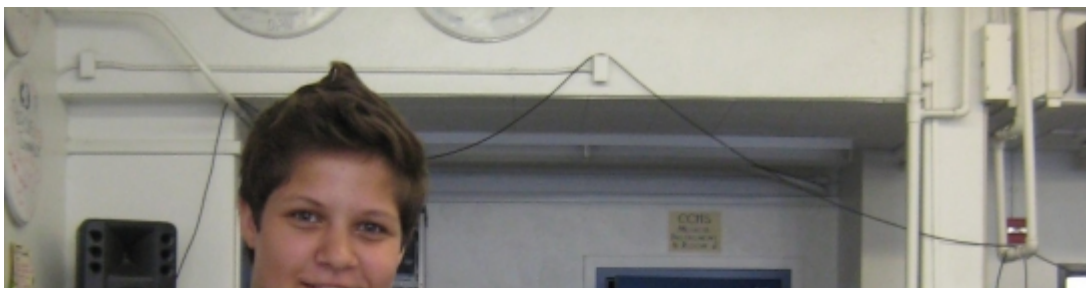
What specific tactics are you using in your GSA's Anti-Slur Campaign?

? The Anti-Slur Campaign is starting through our weeklong Take it Back Ally Week. There will be daily announcements of the statistics on how much LGBT students are harassed so that everyone in the school knows what a big problem this is. We are also passing out ally pledge cards and we have set up a banner in which students who are fully committed to a safer school for all students can sign! We are following this peer education with training for all staff members on Nov. 9th to inform them on how to stop slurs used inside and outside of the classroom, as well as what the law says they have to do.

- Krista Blevins, GSA President Yucca Valley High?

? My GSA is conducting a school climate survey as our first step because even though our school is incredibly open minded and accepting, we still feel like there is improvement to be made. There are problems with slurs and homophobia at my school. We want to change that. By having our school do a climate survey, we can get an idea of how the student body feels about our campus' climate and what GSA and the school can do to ensure that everybody feels comfortable enough to be who they are without fear of being bullied or teased. After all of our efforts, we were able to gather nearly 2,000 surveys. We plan on publishing the results of the survey in our school newspaper, bulletin, and possibly even in the Culver City newspaper. We will also deliver the results to the Culver City School Board members and ask them to work with the GSA to make our school safer. We want to use the results to target specific problems that may exist on campus, such as not having a place where students may go for LGBTQ related resources and counseling, or even including more LGBTQ information in our core classes like history or English.

- Carmen Jovel, GSA President Culver City High?



GSA Vice President Niko Walker and GSA President Carmen Jovel collected nearly 2,000 surveys.

? My GSA is doing a presentation to our teachers that will use personal stories and education about the laws that protect LGBTQ students. I will share my own personal story of harassment that a lot of them weren't aware happened on our campus. By using my own experiences to start the training, we are connecting with the teachers emotionally and opening their minds to the fact that this is a real issue. It is our hope to create a more accepting environment and more awareness of what LGBTQ youth are going through in Glendora.

- Isaiah Baiseri, GSA President Glendora High

How can you use one-day events in your GSA's Anti-Slur Campaign?

? We organized a big turnout for the national Spirit Day to remember all those teens that had committed suicide because they were bullied so much for being LGBT. We used Facebook to spread the word and let people know what we were doing and why were doing it. We all wore purple in their memory and we got that school involved as well. So many people learned about the bullying against LGBT people and what they can do to stop it through Spirit Day. Before we organized the day, most of my school thought it wasn't a big deal to be LGBT, but now they know better.

- Hugo Meza, GSA President Littlerock High School

? A GSA can use the Day of Silence to raise awareness of LGBT issues. By attracting attention through the silent protest of the day, you are making awareness of the issues faced by LGBTQ youth. This awareness can lead you to get students, teachers and administrators as new supporters to help you stop slurs. It can be a great way to end your Anti-Slur campaign. If you start in the beginning of the year, train your teachers, use creative posters to spread the word, make sure your school is following the law, and use fun tactics like guerrilla theater to educate your peers in a new way, you can end your successful campaign with a great Day of Silence that shows how much your school is against LGBTQ slurs.

- Isaiah Baiseri, GSA President Glendora High

What helped you plan and organize doing the school climate survey?

? The help and cooperation of our school administrators and teachers, as well as that of the GSA members, helped us plan and organize the school climate survey. In addition, the fact that our school is so diverse and accepting also made the task possible. However, if it had not been for the ideas on the GSA Network website, none of this would have been possible.

- Carmen Jovel, GSA President Culver City High

We can help YOU make your school better NOW by stopping anti-LGBT slurs![Contact us](#)^[1] and we can schedule a training at your school!

[Learn more about Anti-Slur Campaigns and the other campaigns GSA Network can help you plan and launch.](#) ^[2]

If you have more questions or aren't sure if an Anti-Slur Campaign will work at your school, talk to your [local GSA Network staff](#) ^[1] or go to one of our awesome [Leadership Summits](#) ^[3] or [conferences](#)

[4] that's happening near you!

Source URL: <http://gsanetwork.org/news/blog/make-your-school-better-now-through-anti-slur-campaign/10/28/10>

Links

- [1] <http://gsanetwork.org/about-us/contact>
- [2] <http://gsanetwork.org/get-involved/change-your-school>
- [3] <http://gsanetwork.org/events/trainings-and-summits>
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