



Published on *Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network* (<https://gsanetwork.org>)

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## GSAs Are Creating Change

Feb. 1, 2012 ? Dulce



This year GSA Network staff traveled to Baltimore to attend the **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's** national conference on LGBT equality, **Creating Change**. Over five days, activists from around the country, and the world, gathered in workshops and meetings to discuss the LGBTQ movement. We met up with **GSA activist Shaily Haikimian, a student from Indiana University**, and interviewed her on her experience at Creating Change.

Read the interview below or watch the video on [YouTube](#) [2].

**Dulce Garcia, GSA Network:** Where are you from?

**Shaily Haikimian:** I'm originally from the North suburbs of Chicago ? Lincolnshire, Illinois - but I currently live in Bloomington, Indiana, at Indiana University.



you become an activist?

**SH:** My freshman year of high school I decided to sign up for the Day of Silence. And I knew after that day I should start doing more. My sophomore year I started doing work with the GSA and my work really blossomed from there.

**DG:** You lead a workshop at Creating Change about GSA activism. What was it about?

**SH:** The workshop included ways to start a GSA and ideas to incorporate into a GSA. Many people don't realize that almost always there's a right to a GSA. If you're in a community that says, 'We can't have a GSA because it's against our values.' You know, the law is with you most of the time.

**DG:** What activism skills or new ideas from Creating Change are you going to take back with you?

**SH:** A lot of the conversations we had here were all about privilege - the privilege we have, when do we check our privilege, and when can we utilize our privilege to get our movement ahead of the game. It's been a recurring theme at a lot of the queer conferences I've been to and I think that's a huge take away - to make us all come together in our differences.

**DG:** What inspires you to be an activist?

**SH:** I think the youth really do inspire me to be an activist. When I see someone else or myself helping a youth become better and want to take another step to do more work or to even just come out. I think that is so beautiful. That means that our work is already successful when we can make kids feel comfortable with who they are. And I think that's what continues to motivate me; because I know - even if we just change one life you've already made a difference.

**Haikimian is making it better and creating change by educating others on how to start a GSA. To watch the full video, [click here](#) [2]. Her story inspired us to create change, too.**

To read more about Creating Change, visit:

[http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/01/creating\\_change\\_2012.html](http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/01/creating_change_2012.html) [3]

Also at Creating Change, [FIERCE youth](#) [4] 'mic checked' the Obama administration and call attention to the lack of support given to LGBT/Q youth of color. Youth across the nation are demanding their voice be heard!

[See the video!](#) [5]

**What's your activist story? Tell it on camera.** Upload your own video to [YouTube](#) [6] as part of the [Make It Better Project](#) [6].

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**Source URL:** <https://gsanetwork.org/news/blog/gsas-are-creating-change/02/01/12>

#### Links

[1] [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18vweh0r\\_aA&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18vweh0r_aA&feature=youtu.be)

[2] [http://youtu.be/18vweh0r\\_aA](http://youtu.be/18vweh0r_aA)

[3] [http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/01/creating\\_change\\_2012.html](http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/01/creating_change_2012.html)

[4] <http://www.fiercenyc.org/>

[5] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHkeCvzhYfU&feature=share>

[6] <http://www.youtube.com/user/MakeltBetterProject>