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Jump-starting Colorado's GSA Movement

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Colorado's GSA movement has hit the ground running! After Colorado became the 13th state to pass an anti-bullying bill that specifically protects LGBT students from harassment, [One Colorado](#) [1] launched [Colorado GSA Network](#) [2] to empower youth activists to implement the new bill and make their schools safer.



One Colorado hired [Daniel Ramos](#) [3], a Southern California native, to get the job done. When Ramos took the job in July 2011, there were 72 GSAs in the vast mountain state. Within just 7 months of Ramos' leadership, there are now 104.

"Our vision for LGBTQ and ally youth is that all Colorado youth feel safe and included in their schools," Ramos explained. "We want youth to have access to all educational and leadership opportunities, regardless of the type of club."

In the short term, Colorado GSA Network has a few clear goals: build active and effective GSAs, build a statewide network and regional connections, and unlock the power of Colorado's youth.

They believe it will take everyone in a school community to really reach that goal.

"It has to be a really comprehensive process," Ramos explained. "We've been able to adapt and take up opportunities to work with youth, administrators, teachers, elected officials and parents," Ramos said. "We want to create a true partnership between all people in a school to truly make it safe."



Ramos is working on a variety of campaigns, including combating transphobia. “Not just with straight folks, but in GSAs,” Ramos said. “We are helping GSAs advocate for gender inclusive bathroom spaces, and helping them to bring up trans topics in GSAs.”

Ramos added that they “are looking at intersections of queer undocumented youth and students who are affected by school-to-prison pipeline and other issues facing schools.” Bringing that social justice framework to Colorado’s GSAs is a core component of Colorado GSA Network’s program, and Ramos works to educate GSAs about intersecting identities and what Colorado GSA Network means by “social justice.”

Colorado GSA Network’s growth is inspiring not only to us at GSA Network, but the whole [National Association of GSA Networks](#) [4]. Ramos is a member of the [National Association Steering Committee](#) [5] and Colorado has truly amplified the national GSA movement through their social media activism. The Colorado GSA Network Leadership Council is even launching a [Colorado offshoot](#) [6] of the [Make It Better Project](#) [7]. “We’re excited to partner with GSA Network to move that campaign forward,” Ramos said.

To learn more about the Colorado GSA Network, visit: www.cogsanetwork.org [2]

To learn about other members of the National Association of GSA Networks, visit: www.gsanetwork.org/national-directory [8]

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Links

[1] <http://www.one-colorado.org/>

[2] <http://www.cogsanetwork.org>

[3] <http://cogsanetwork.org/about/staff/>

[4] <http://gsanetwork.org/get-involved/change-nation/national-association-gsa-networks>

[5] <http://gsanetwork.org/news/blog/welcome-new-national-association-steering-committee/10/10/11>

[6] <http://cogsanetwork.org/make-it-better/>

[7] <http://www.makeitbetterproject.org>

[8] <http://gsanetwork.org/national-directory>