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LGBT Youth Leaders Work to Stop Violence in Schools at Annual Fresno Conference

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FRESNO ? On Saturday, more than one hundred young people from the Central Valley will gather for an annual youth-led conference for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) and straight ally youth seeking to stop violence in schools. The 2013 Expression Not Suppression conference, hosted by Gay-Straight Alliance Network and Community Link, will build students' and adult allies' skills through workshops and a resource fair, empowering youth to create safer schools and stop harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

WHAT: 9th Annual Expression Not Suppression (ENS) conference for LGBTQ youth & allies

WHEN: Saturday, February 23, 9am-7pm, followed by a youth-only dance.

WHERE: The Big Red Church, 2131 North Van Ness Blvd., Fresno

"All students, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth, deserve safe schools where they're free from bullying and harassment," said Dawn-Marie Luna, Gay-Straight Alliance Network's Central Valley Program Coordinator. "Young people from across the Central Valley come to this conference because they believe that youth leadership, not police and guns, is the key to ending violence in schools."

Terisa Tinei Siagatonu, a spoken word artist and poet, will keynote the event. Workshops, several of which will be led by youth themselves, will include discussions about starting a Gay-Straight Alliance club, students' legal rights, and the school-to-prison pipeline. There will be a separate track for GSA advisors.

Calen Valencia, a high school senior from Tulare who will train youth at the conference, said: "Since starting the Gay-Straight Alliance at my school and working with other GSA Network youth trainers, I've built a safer school environment and have felt more empowered than ever. I helped plan ENS in hopes to share all of my wonderful knowledge with other GSA leaders in the Valley."

For more information, visit www.gsannetwork.org/ens [2].

Press Release

<http://gsannetwork.org> [3]

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[1] <http://gsannetwork.org/news/j%C3%B3venes-l%C3%ADderes-lgbt-buscan-detener-la-violencia-en-las-escuelas-en-una-conferencia-anual-en-fr>

[2] <http://gsannetwork.org/ens>

[3] <http://gsannetwork.org>