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Transgender Day of Remembrance: Message from a Youth Leader

Nov. 20, 2013 ? Dean Welliver

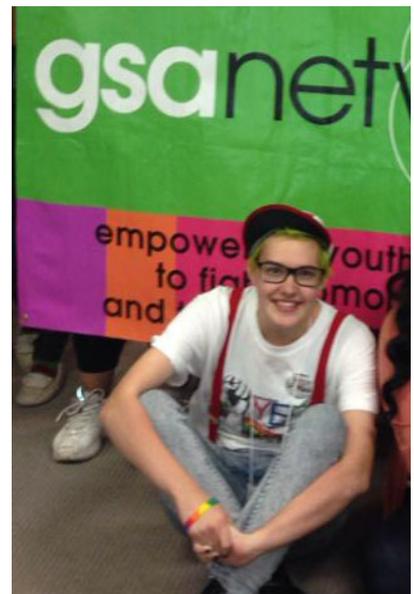
Dean Welliver is a GSA Network youth leader from Bakersfield who serves on the Southern California Youth Council and as a youth trainer for the region. At 1pm PST today, [he will appear on HuffPostLive](#)^[1] to discuss TDOR, the School Success & Opportunity Act, and his experience as a transgender student.



Today is [Transgender Day of Remembrance \(TDOR\)](#)^[2], an international holiday to commemorate the people who have been murdered due to anti-transgender prejudice. It's very telling of how widespread this violence is that our only transgender-specific holiday is dedicated to memorializing all the people who lost their lives because they were transgender. **In a world that routinely ignores trans* people and the violence committed against them, TDOR remembers them and highlights the violence so often swept under the rug.**

So often for TDOR, the victims of anti-transgender violence turn into a list of names to be read, but each of these individuals is so much more than a name. These were real people with hopes, dreams, needs, desires, wants, friends and families. Their lives were taken too soon, and deserve to be remembered.

Remembering is critical when what happened to these individuals continues to happen to trans* and gender non-conforming individuals today. **Without knowledge of what is happening, we cannot stop and prevent the cycle of violence.** Transphobia, cissexism, and transmisogyny (an oppression that is the combination of transphobia and sexism) are all ingrained into larger society. When we fail to confront even subtle forms of anti-transgender violence ? like slurs or discriminatory school policies ? we perpetuate the idea that killing trans* and gender non-conforming individuals is okay. We must also remember that a disproportionate number of victims remembered on Transgender Day of Remembrance are transgender women of color and/or of low-income status. Violence against transgender people is heightened when you factor in other parts of identity, such as race and class. Eliminating the harm against transgender* individuals will never be accomplished if we only tackle anti-transgender prejudice. **We must confront all forms of oppression to eliminate violence against transgender people**



because being transgender is only part of a person's identity.

This is where we, as GSA Network youth leaders, come in! We have the ability as to change our school communities and climates to be safe, accepting, knowledgeable, and accessible to trans* and gender non-conforming youth! We have the power as trans* youth and cisgender allies to combat the negative messages being sent out in the dominant culture and educate our peers and school community through GSA actions and trainings about transgender* people and the issues that affect the community. We have the opportunity to advocate for the implementation of laws like the [School Success and Opportunity Act](#) [3] and the passage of other policies, like reforming discriminatory school discipline, to ensure all students can fully participate in school and graduate. **By taking action against all the forms of violence against transgender folks we can help make our schools and the world a safer and more accepting place for all individuals.**

So today, light a candle, remember the lives lost, and talk to your GSA about how today and every day going forward, you will stand with those who are still here.

**Photo, left, of Dean at a GSA Network summit.*

Source URL: <https://gsanetwork.org/news/blog/transgender-day-remembrance-message-youth-leader/11/20/13>

Links

[1] <http://live.huffingtonpost.com/r/segment/the-fight-for-transgender-teen-rights/5283eb6478c90a07fb0002b5>

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

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