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# NorCal Activists Hit the Beach and Make Social Justice Waves!

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**Activists! Dolphins! And S?mores! Oh My!** On August 12?14, twenty Northern California and Central Valley youth activists hit the beach at Marin Headlands Institute in Sausalito, California. The eager activists packed their sunscreen and sleeping bags and embarked on a 3-day skills-building journey to learn about activism and organizing their GSAs.

While at Activist Camp, the youth activists developed their understanding around identity, power, and oppression by attending workshops like ?Understanding Patriarchy, Capitalism & Class Inequality? and ?Understanding White Supremacy & Racial Justice.? To strengthen their GSAs, campers also learned about coalition building and how to manage conflict effectively.  ?At Camp, I learned a lot about the systems of oppression and how they work together.  With my GSA this school year, I plan to educate about oppression and its connections and also about the gender spectrum,? said **Elise Peterson Trujillo**, a student at Acalanes High School.  ?I will definitely be informing students of their rights in school and how to form coalitions with other clubs for connections and more visibility.?

Several participants spoke about learning confidence and empowerment within their identities and that they were not alone. One of these participants, **Jorge Cruz** of Delhi High School said of his experience, ?I learned to stand up for my rights, and I am so proud to be bisexual thanks to GSA Activist Camp.? The youth also participated in activities that demonstrated the connection between fighting all forms of oppression and that LGBTQ rights are not separate from other movements for justice.

When the youth activists weren?t busy learning about activism and building their skills in workshops, they hit the beach to soak up the sun and even spotted a few dolphins!  On Saturday night, the youth and camp mentors put on a drag and talent show and showcased their talents. During the Community Circle, a farewell activity, many youth talked about gaining pride and confidence throughout the weekend?s activities.

As the Northern California Program Coordinator for GSA Network, I work with so many youth on a daily basis and I was thrilled to see everything come together at camp. As evidenced by the youth voices, GSA Network?s youth focused model is both effective and life changing. Camp has not only given youth the opportunities to assist in self discovery, but also to equip youth activists with the tools they need to make lasting change in their schools.  I look forward to working with the youth activists from camp as well as many more during the next school year!

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