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GSA Movement in the Valley!

Nov. 29, 2011 ? Victoria

GSA Leadership Summits happen all over California,



from San Diego to San Francisco. But what makes summits in Visalia and Modesto stand out amongst the rest? **It is exactly that - the summits happened in Visalia and Modesto!** Both these Central Valley cities sit in the middle of California and are the homes to youth who continue to fight for their GSAs simply to exist on their campuses. Not discouraged by the challenging voices

they face, Central Valley youth arrived in droves on October 31st in Visalia and November 19th in Modesto with a contagious passion to make positive change for their LGBTQ and allied students.

Eager to learn "How to Have A Kick Ass GSA?" and dedicated to being social justice activists, the youth engaged in a full day of leadership workshops and activities facilitated by none other than local Central Valley youth trainers. **Danny Tela**, a Sunnyside High School GSA member and local youth trainer, shared with participants his personal passion for activism. **"I am an activist because I want safer schools for all LGBTQ students, including me and my boyfriend,"** he said.

Central Valley Youth Jumping Visalia and Modesto youth shared their experiences of combating gender stereotypes and slurs. They were excited to hear other GSA youth leaders actively taking part in making change at their high schools. A Modesto youth thanked youth trainers **Danny Tela, Christian Capulin,** and **Brianna Navarro** for explaining how to use the California Education Code as a shield against harassment and discrimination. **"I never knew we had rights at school. I knew I should not feel bad about who I am, but I didn't know how to stand up for myself. Now, I know I have the California Education Code to protect me. Thanks for teaching me this."**

Feeding off this contagious passion, [Victoria Benavides](#) [1], GSA Network's Central Valley Program Coordinator, is thrilled to announce another great event for youth? **Expression Not Suppression (ENS)**! ENS is a youth-led conference for middle and high school LGBT and allied youth who want to further the GSA movement in the Central Valley and to become a GSA activist. ENS will be held on **Saturday, March 24th, 2012** at the Big Red Church in Fresno, California.

For more information about Expression Not Suppression 2012, visit gsanetwork.org/ENS [2].

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Links

[1] <mailto:victoria@gsanetwork.org>

[2] <https://gsanetwork.org/ENS>