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Mar. 15, 2014

FRESNO, March 15, 2014 - On Saturday, more than one hundred young people from the Central Valley joined together at Edison High School in Fresno for an annual youth-led conference for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) and straight ally youth pushing for educational justice. The 2014 Expression Not Suppression conference, hosted by Gay-Straight Alliance Network, builds students' and adult allies' skills through workshops and a resource fair, empowering youth to push back against harassment and practices that target youth based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

"Working with GSA Network has helped me come out and truly be myself," said Edison High School's 17-year-old Gay-Straight Alliance President, Alex Bordona, who helped organize the conference. "It's so important for queer youth to be able to come to a conference like Expression Not Suppression and know that they're not alone in the pressures they're facing that push them out of school."

Added Jonatan Ramirez, an 18-year old senior at Edison: "We want everyone to leave ENS with the knowledge that, together, we have the power to stop the unfair suspensions and expulsions of LGBTQ youth and youth of color, and that we can make a difference by pushing for practices like restorative justice in our schools."

The conference keynote will be delivered by Ronnie Veliz, a queer Peruvian American organizer devoted to reducing health disparities among young people. Workshops, several of which will be led by youth themselves, will include discussions about starting a Gay-Straight Alliance club, advocating for and implementing restorative justice practices in schools, and the school-to-prison pipeline. There will be a separate track for GSA advisors.

Expression Not Suppression 2014 sponsors included Building Healthy Communities, Dulce Up Front, the ACLU of Northern California, and the Bulldog Pride Fund.

For more information, visit www.gsanetwork.org/ens [1].

Press Release

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[1] <https://gsanetwork.org/ens>