

NUESTRAS HISTORÍAS, NUESTRO ARCOÍRIS

CELEBRATING LATIN@ LGBTQ HISTORY MONTH

www.gsanetwork.org



Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBTQ) Latina/o people have been major contributors to the United States in everything from the arts, politics, and social justice movements. From the famous Mexican painter Frida Kahlo to the famous Latino activist José Julio Sarria who was the first openly LGBTQ person to run for public office– LGBTQ Latina/o figures have had a significant influence on U.S. culture. When GSAs celebrate the contributions of Latina/o LGBTQ people and advocate for the visibility of these important historical figures, we can show the beautiful diversity of the LGBTQ movement, make sure that no one's history is forgotten, and show how the LGBTQ justice movement is connected to other social justice movements fighting to make a better society.

One way GSA clubs do this is by celebrating Latina/o History Month from September 15th to October 15th. Latina/o History Month was started to focus on and celebrate the unique history and contributions of Latina/o people in the United States. During the month, many schools and student clubs will organize class presentations, assemblies, educational posters and fun events as a way to bring alive the rich history of Latina/o people.

If your school doesn't have a Latina/o History Month celebration, organize with your GSA to start official events at your school by working with administration, teachers, staff, student groups, and others .

Here are some helpful ideas of activities you can do at your school during Latina/o History Month:

Teach Your School

- Create a PowerPoint presentation highlighting important Latina/o LGBTQ leaders, organizations & events to present to your classes. You can do your presentations in ALL of your classes because LGBTQ Latino folks have made contributions in EVERY subject including music, literature, art, science, health and more. For example, you can do a presentation on the writings of Cherrie Moraga in your English class.
- Train your social studies and English teachers on Latina/o LGBTQ authors and historical figures and suggest ways they could incorporate them and their writing into their lessons.
- Work with your school librarian or administration to make sure there is a Latina/o History display board that includes LGBTQ people, as well as books by important authors like Gloria Anzaldua and Charles Rice Gonzalez.
- Organize with other student clubs, such as MEChA or the Latino Awareness Club, to make sure the month's activities include LGBTQ leaders.
- Invite speakers to your school who can talk about LGBTQ Latina/o history or the experiences of Latina/o LGBTQ people.
- Organize discussions on the current events related to LGBTQ Latina/o folks that demonstrate how homophobia, transphobia, and racism affect their lives today.
- Highlight local LGBTQ Latina/o people who have given back to your community.
- Screen a film like Pedro, which documents the life of AIDS educator and activist Pedro Zamora, or Tres Gotas de Agua, a short documentary of three Latina mothers talking about their journey with their LGBTQ children. Screen a film like Brother Outsider, which documents the life of Civil Rights leader Bayard Rustin.

Be Creative!

- Organize a poster art campaign or contest featuring LGBTQ Latina/o historical figures, such as activist Laura M. Esquivel.
- Create a display of pictures and biographies. You can find a list of some of these leaders at our LGBTQ Latino History page on GSA Network's website.
- Create a LGBTQ Latina/o History Timeline and display it in your school. For ideas, check out the Latino GLBT History Project of Washington, D.C.'s timeline.
- Use your school's public announcements to share stories! Play sound clips from singers Chavela Vargas and Christian Chavez. Read poetry from Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua, or read selections of important speeches by Jose Julio Sarria, the first openly LGBTQ person in the United States to run for a public office in 1961.

Use Social Media

- Highlight important figures through your GSA's social networking sites like Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter. Make videos, post photos, tweet, and even make a Facebook or Wiki page for your favorite icon.
- Promote all of your Latina/o History Month events on social networking sites and be sure to promote events organized by other clubs.

Make Everyday Latina/o LGBTQ History Month!

Remember that having one month of commemoration of the lives of LGBTQ Latina/o people is just the beginning! You can work with your school's history, literature, Spanish and social studies teachers to make sure that they are including the stories, activism and lives of Latina/o LGBTQ people in your classes throughout the school year. Contact GSA Network for ideas and help on how to do this in your school!

Have ongoing conversations with your GSA about why it's important to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of LGBTQ people of color to society and to social justice movements. Talking in your GSA about whose history is remembered and whose isn't is a great way to start building an anti-racist GSA. To get started, see our resource on Creating Inclusive GSAs.

Most of all, have fun learning, teaching and celebrating some of our most important LGBTQ leaders and community members in history!

