

An Invitation to attend The OK2BME Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Conference 2012

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To: Senior School GSA teacher-leaders of the Waterloo Region District School Board,

OK2BME is a set of support services operated through K-W Counselling Services in partnership with Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) youth and families. These support services include LGBTQ-positive individual and family counselling, social and recreational groups, consultation, public education, and help with establishing and sustaining Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) in our schools.

On **Friday, October 19, 2012 from 8am to 4pm**, **OK2BME** in partnership with the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) will hold the 3rd annual GSA Conference. This year, we have decided to open the conference to those Grade 7&8 schools that have GSAs, as well as those Grade 7&8 schools who hope to create GSAs. Therefore, the 2012 GSA Conference will be for **Grade 7-12** students and one GSA teacher-leader/child & youth worker (see numbers below) Please note: New location for the conference is the **Waterloo Inn Conference Hotel, 475 King Street North, Waterloo, N2J 2Z5**.

The GSA Conference is provided to students **without cost**. As per last year, signed parent consent and a signed GSA consent form is required from students to participate. These will be available on-line (www.ok2bme.ca) when registration opens on September 24th. Students, teachers, and child & youth workers will be engaged in experiential learning workshops that create safe spaces and foster gay-straight alliances between LGBTQ youth, allies and their school and community.

Five students from each of the 17 high school GSAs and 5 students from each of the eleven Grade 7&8 schools are able to attend; as well as one teacher/child & youth worker who acts as the GSA leader. We ask that you strictly adhere to these numbers for reason of facility capacity, and again, that the event is again available at no fee. Please select students who have not yet had the opportunity to attend a previous GSA Conference. Based on registration, there may be more than five spaces per school available, but this will be determined closer to the end of registration. Please note: consent and parent permission forms and other conference information will be available to both students and teachers online on September 24th at our website: www.ok2bme.ca . As in previous years, **on-line registration will begin at 8am and close at 4pm on October 16, 2012.**

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