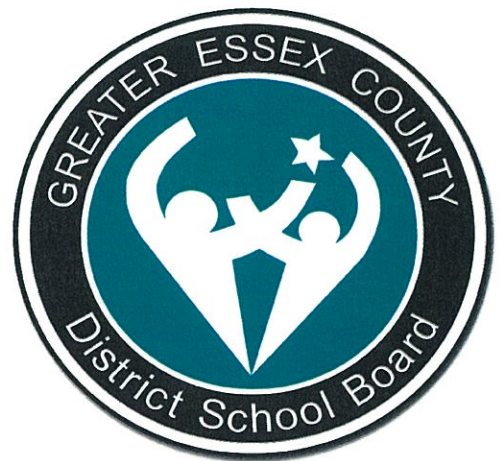


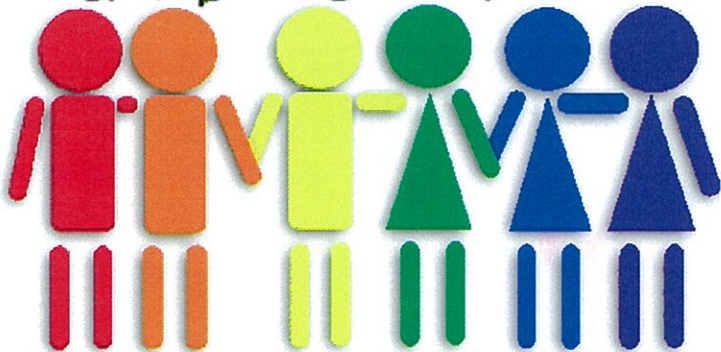
Working Towards a More Inclusive Community Today

-A Safe Schools Forum

Tuesday May 17, 2011



Gay Straight Alliance



Working toward a more inclusive community today!

University Of Windsor
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Cost: \$5 lunch included

NEWS RELEASE

Greater Essex County District School Board 451 Park Street West, Windsor ON N9A 6K1
519-255-3200



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2011

**Contact: Diversity Officer Rachel Olivero
Phone: 519-255-3200 ext. 10213**

Safe Schools for Everyone **- GECDSB collaborates with Windsor Pride on conference -**

In an effort to raise awareness around homophobic bullying, the Greater Essex County District School Board has accepted the assistance of Windsor Pride to deliver a conference for student-delegates from its 15 high schools.

This groundbreaking, day-long forum, *Working Towards a More Inclusive Community Today*, will be held on **Tuesday, May 17th** at the University of Windsor's Toldo Health Education Centre. Students will attend workshops presented by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) and the Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) and there will be a panel discussion led by representatives of the 6 high schools that currently operate a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) club.

Each school delegation attending will be mobilized to prepare and implement a new safe schools project or activity at their school.

The University of Windsor and its Faculty of Education are also partners in this event with support from the Royal Bank Foundation.

The conference begins at 8:30 a.m. For more information contact Diversity Officer Rachel Olivero @ 519-255-3200 ext. 10213 or Public Relations Officer Scott Scantlebury @ 519-255-3200 ext. 10224.



**For Immediate Release
May 2, 2011**

Greater Essex County District School Board and Windsor Pride Community collaborate on a safe schools forum to serve the needs of LGBTIQ teens and their allies, and put policy into practice.

Windsor ON: On May 17, 2011 Windsor Pride Community (WPC) and The Greater Essex County District School Board (GECD SB) will host **Working Towards a More Inclusive Community Today – A Safe Schools Forum**. This forum is designed to support students and teachers to implement strategies which meet the specific needs of LGBTIQ students and their allies in the schools. The Royal Bank Foundation supports this collaborative initiative to reach out and better serve city, rural and isolated LGBTIQ youth across Windsor Essex.

"Too often queer and questioning youth feel unsafe to come out at school, at home and at work. There can be much bullying, harassment and fear of discrimination. Even though the Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, some remain unaware of their responsibilities of citizenship. Building inclusive schools puts policy into practice and addresses homophobia" says Neil Mens, Executive Director.

All 15 GECD SB high schools have been invited to send delegations including teachers, students, vice principals, parent council reps, guidance counselors, social workers, student council reps, safe schools committee reps so that on their return, each school delegation will be prepared to implement a new LGBTIQ safe school project or activity. Six area high schools currently host a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA). The Safe Schools Act requires all schools to provide a safe learning environment for all students across the province.

"Both the Greater Essex County District School Board and Windsor Pride value and promote diversity, acceptance and respect. I believe this GSA conference can be a catalyst for bringing about positive change." says Warren Kennedy, Director of Education for the Greater Essex County District School Board.

We are also thrilled to be welcoming delegations from both the French and English Catholic Windsor- Essex School Boards, and the Greater Essex County Parent Involvement Committee.

For more information:

Neil Mens, neil@windsorpride.com
Executive Director
Windsor Pride Community
Cell 519 903 6727

**WORKING TOWARDS A MORE
INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY TODAY**

- A SAFE SCHOOLS FORUM

Tuesday, May 17, 2011

Name of GECDSB School _____

Team Member Composition (10-15 Members)

	Name	Position/ Title	Or Grade Level	Dietary Consideration
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				

School Lead Team Member _____

Embracing Diversity Project Grants Application

Yes **No**

A Safe Schools Forum
Working Towards a More Inclusive Community Today
Hosted by GECDSD and Windsor Pride Community
University of Windsor

Format

TIME		PLACE
8:00 – 8:30 am	Registration & Light Breakfast & Exhibitors (Juice, muffins, etc) Lead Teacher pick up registration package for school delegation. Video Clips from EGALE Canada, It Gets Better Project Chatham Kent/Canada, MOET Equity and Inclusion,	
8:30 – 8:45 am	Opening Ceremonies & Introductions Teresa Sims – Can-Am Centre- Smudge Warren Kennedy, RBC Foundation, Rachel Olivero, Neil Mens	
8:45 – 10:00 am	Film Screening JUST BECAUSE I AM (a documentary on Homophobia and youth in Windsor Essex, 55 min.) Q + A with Director and Guests	
10:00 – 11:15 am	Workshop #1 Towards Inclusive Schools Workshop A Building Inclusive Schools Workshop B Equitable and Safe Schools	Break Out Rooms
11:15 am – 12:15 pm	LUNCH + Exhibitors	
12:15 – 1:30 pm	Workshop #2 Workshop A Building Inclusive Schools Workshop B Equitable and Safe Schools	
1:30 – 2:15 pm	Panel Discussion by Student(s) and Staff Moderated By Sandra Bortolin	

2:15 – 3:00 pm	School Initiatives / Workshop # 3 (In school Groups) Facilitated school team project planning with guided questions, flip chart. (Bring a Laptop for recording and disseminating your project plan and follow up)	
3:00 pm	Closing Remarks & Thanks	



May 03, 2011

Dear Principal,

May 17th has been declared Anti-Homophobia Day in Windsor and Essex County. The Greater Essex County District School Board in partnership with Windsor Pride Community and the University of Windsor Faculty of Education are proud to host a Safe Schools Forum called “Working Towards a More Inclusive Community” on **May 17, 2011** at the University of Windsor Campus. Generous funding for this conference has been provided in part by the Royal Bank of Canada Foundation.

We would like to invite your school to participate in this forum by having a representative group of 10-15 members of your school community attend. Ideally, school teams should be comprised of students, teachers and parents. Suggested participants could include your school’s Guidance Counsellor, Vice Principal or Principal, Child and Youth Workers, Parent Council Representatives, Student Government Leaders, Safe Schools Committee Members and Social Worker. The students selected should be considered school leaders with a keen interest in social justice issues.

The Forum is designed to reaffirm our commitment to providing safe, inclusive, diverse and equitable learning environments for all, free from discrimination, bullying, and harassment. This Forum will offer participants specific tools and resources to meet the needs of students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, and Two Spirited. The forum will address the establishment and strengthening of school groups called Gay Straight Alliances (GSA). The forum is also designed to bring together school communities from across Windsor and Essex County to share experiences and best practices.

Each school is responsible for providing supply coverage for the participating staff members and transportation to the University of Windsor. We are pleased to announce that GECDSD Secondary Schools are eligible for a **subsidy for up to \$300.00 from the Diversity Office** to cover some of these costs. We have included an “Embracing Diversity Projects” grant application to access these funds. Please note: applications do NOT need to be pre-approved. Schools will be reimbursed for expenses for up to \$300.00. Signed applications and completed expense reports (including receipts) must be received by the Diversity Office in order to process the school reimbursements after the forum.

The cost of the forum to the student is \$5/participant which will include a breakfast and lunch. The form to register your school delegation is **due by Tuesday, May 10, 2011 to Rachel Olivero at the Board Office.**

Included in the package are:

- 2 Posters to advertise the event
- Embracing Diversity Project grant information
- Letters to principal, teacher, participant, & parent/guardian
- School Team Registration Form

Thank you very much for your consideration. Your participation will help ensure the success of this event! For more information please contact Rachel Olivero, GECDSD Diversity Officer.

Sincerely,

Terry Lyons
Superintendent of Education

Neil Mens
Executive Director
Windsor Pride Community



May 03, 2011

Dear Teacher,

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Sincerely,

Terry Lyons
Superintendent of Education

Neil Mens
Executive Director
Windsor Pride Community

Working Towards a More Inclusive Community Today A Safe Schools Forum

Hosted by GECDSB and Windsor Pride Community
Toldo Health Education Centre
University of Windsor

May 17, 2011 Agenda (Final)

TIME		Location	Action
8:00 – 8:30 am	Registration & Light Breakfast & Exhibitors (Juice, coffee, banana bread etc) Lead Teacher picks up registration package for school delegation. Video Clips from EGALE Canada, It Gets Better Project Chatham Kent/Canada, MOET Equity and Inclusion,	Room 102 Light Breakfast in Foyer	
8:30 – 8:45 am	Opening Ceremonies & Introductions Neil Mens, Windsor Pride Community; Teresa Sims – Can-Am Centre- Smudge; Stephen Mattis & Margaret Corio, RBC Foundation; Warren Kennedy, GECDSB; Rachel Olivero, GECDSB;	Room 102	
8:45 – 9:45 am	Film Screening JUST BECAUSE I AM (a documentary on Homophobia and Youth in Windsor Essex, 45 min.) Q + A with Director Gabrielle Pescadore and Guests	Room 102	
9:45 – 11:00 am	Workshop #1 Towards Inclusive Schools Workshop A Building Inclusive Schools- Presenter – Alan Heatherington, OCT (ETFO) Workshop B Equitable and Safe Schools – Presenter- Tracey Hughes, (OSSTF)	Room 104 Room 102	
11:00 am – 11:30 am	LUNCH + Exhibitors	Box Lunches in Foyer	
11:30am – 12:45 pm	Workshop #2 Workshop A Building Inclusive Schools Presenters – Alan Heatherington, OCT (ETFO) Workshop B Equitable and Safe Schools Presenter- Suzette Clark, (OSSTF)	Room 104 Room 102	

12:45 – 1:15 pm	Panel Discussion by Student(s) and Staff Moderated By Sandra Bortolin and Joey Wright	Room 102	
1:15 – 2:30 pm	School Initiatives / Workshop # 3 (In school Groups) Facilitated school team project planning with guided questions, flip chart.	Room 102	
2:30 pm	Closing Remarks & Thanks Terry Lyons, GECDSB; and Neil Mens	Room 102	

Gay teen tells conference of social isolation, bullying

CRAIG PEARSON
The Windsor Star

In grade school they pushed him around. In high school they taunted him. But Angelo Ciardella said the hardest part was when friends abandoned him — all for being gay.

"Bullying has been a recurring theme in my life," the 17-year-old Grade 11 Assumption secondary school student said Tuesday at an anti-homophobia conference at the University of Windsor.

"In high school, it turned into much more hushed tones, whispering behind my back. There was a group of kids who I wasn't familiar with and they would constantly berate me with comments like, 'You're a faggot. Nobody likes you.' Stuff like that."

Ciardella said he always knew he was different, attracted to more "feminine" things than most other boys, even at a young age.

But his lowest point came in Grade 8 when he disclosed his sexuality at school.

"When I came out to my class, I lost a lot of my friends," Ciardella said. "The very few male friends I had were totally gone. I was only left with three of my friends."

Ciardella has since made new friends, and feels more confident about who he is. He said he has learned a lot about himself. And he's particularly encouraged by the turnout at the first Working Towards a More Inclusive Community Today forum, held on International Day Against Homophobia.

More than 200 students,

teachers and parents attended the all-day seminar.

"Every student should have a safe learning environment," said Neil Mens, executive director of Windsor Pride Community, which co-sponsored the event. "We're getting there, but many young people are still afraid to come out at school, where they are subject to bullying and harassment."

A new survey by Egale, a gay rights group, found that 64 per cent of gay students feel unsafe at school, while 21 per cent report actual physical harassment or assault.

Rachel Olivero, diversity officer for the Greater Essex County District School Board, which organized the conference, said four out of 10 students who drop out of school blame it on bullying.

"Part of the reason people

get picked on is because they're different," said Olivero, who stresses that bystanders have to speak out against bullying. "But it's OK to be who you are. What we're really trying to do is change social mores so that it's not OK to bully and it's not cool to bully."

A number of attendees noted that intolerance goes beyond schools, however, stretching into the greater community — and even into the home.

"The message we've been hearing is that so many kids are afraid to come out to their parents," said Jaime Deleveille, chair of the Greater Essex County Parent Involvement Committee.

"Parents need to sit down with their kids at the kitchen table and love their kids for who they are, no matter whether they're straight or gay."

The
Windsor Star
May 18/11