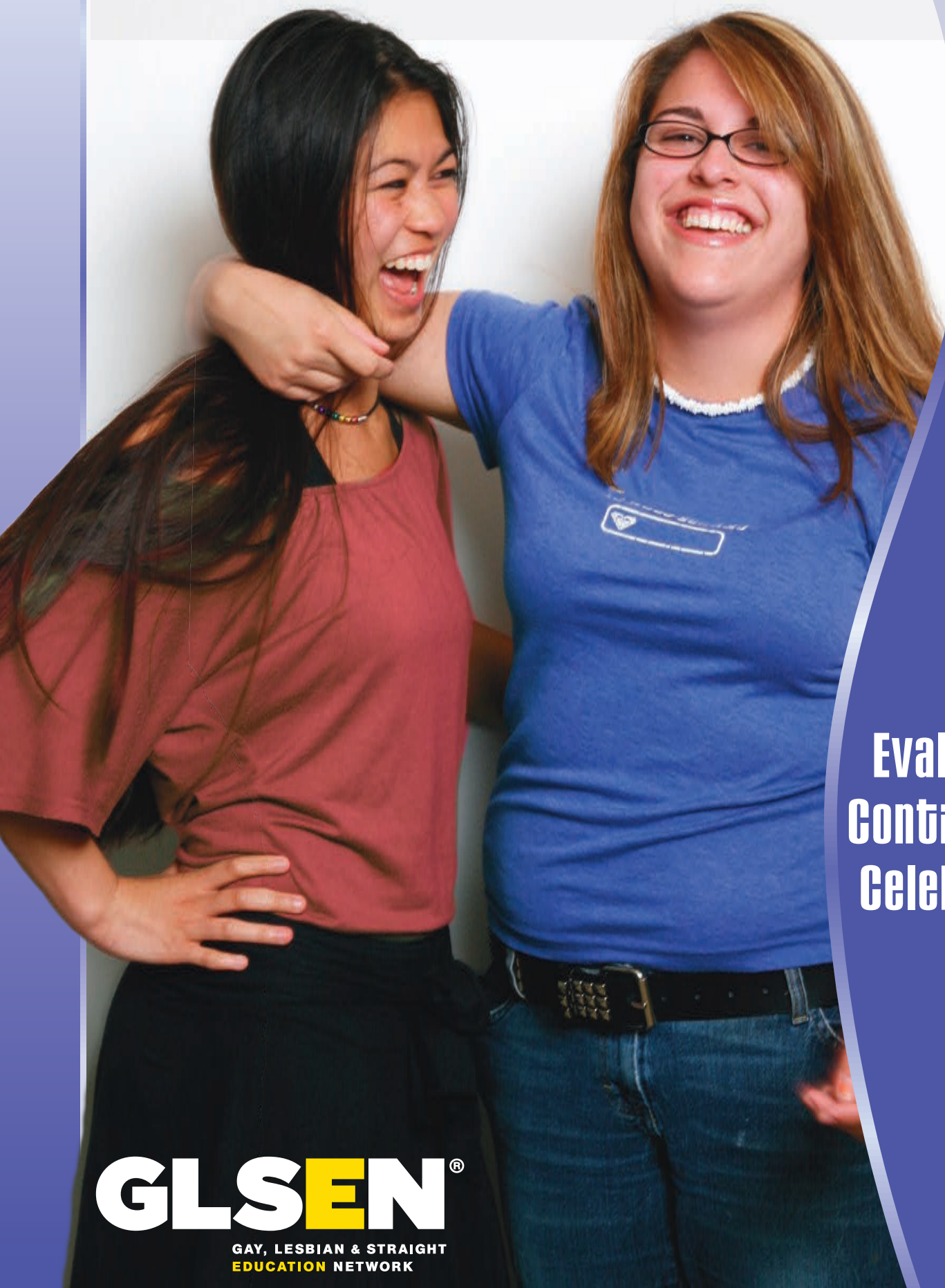


The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide

PART
8



Evaluation,
Continuation,
Celebration!

GLSEN[®]

GAY, LESBIAN & STRAIGHT
EDUCATION NETWORK

The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide

WELCOME!

Welcome to *The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide*! GLSEN’s student organizing team has created this resource to support new and established Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) and similar groups that are working to make schools safer and more inclusive for all students. We’ve been hearing from many organizers that they need concrete ideas for building, shaping and activating their groups, and that’s what this guide is all about. It takes you through the process of establishing your student club, identifying your mission and goals, assessing your school’s climate, and engaging in projects and activities throughout the year. It also offers resources for further exploration.

This guide consists of eight self-contained sections; all are designed to help you *jump-start*—or bring fresh and creative energy to—your student club. Topics include:

- Building and Activating Your GSA
- Tips and Tools for Organizing an Action Campaign
- Strategies for Training Teachers
- Understanding Direct-Action Organizing
- Examining Power, Privilege and Oppression
- Creating Youth-Adult Partnerships
- Making Your Student Club Trans-Inclusive
- Evaluation, Continuation, Celebration!

Please note that we have chosen to use gender-neutral language in this resource. We recognize that replacing “he” and “she” with the gender-neutral “they” is grammatically questionable, but we hope you will overlook this in support of students who do not use “he” or “she” to identify themselves.

If you would like to receive more information about GLSEN, or to get involved in the safer schools movement, please register online at www.studentorganizing.org! We welcome your feedback on the activities in this guide—and we salute you for the important work you are doing to create safer schools for all regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

**Evaluation,
Continuation,
Celebration!**

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Assessing Your Group's Work

What has
been your
**greatest
contribution**
to the group?
Your **biggest
challenge?**

Ready... One of the best ways to learn from and build upon your group's experiences is by taking the time to assess your work together. As the spring semester begins to wind down, people often look back on the past year and look forward to the next; this is a perfect opportunity for reflecting on your goals, activities and working relationships. This activity provides you with three models for conducting a thoughtful assessment process in your group.

Set... People: Entire group, working first as individuals, then in pairs, then as a whole

Tools: Loose-leaf paper (4–6 sheets per person), pens (1 per person), large paper (6–8 sheets), markers (just a few), tape

Time: 40–60 minutes

Additional Resource: "Our GSA Journal" in Appendix

GO! Individual Activity: Self-Assessment (5–10 minutes)

Step 1: Begin by distributing two sheets of loose-leaf paper and pens to everyone. If you have enough space, try to sit apart from one another so that each of you can really focus on your own thoughts.

Step 2: Take a few minutes to reflect on your own participation in the group. This part is not meant to be shared unless people wish to

do so; it's meant simply to get everyone thinking about the year and how they contributed to it. If you prefer to write down your thoughts as they come to you, that's fine. If you'd like some specific guidelines, consider the following questions:

- What have been your roles and responsibilities in the group this year?
- How have you communicated your ideas and criticisms to the group?
- What has been your greatest contribution to the group, the one of which you are proudest?
- How do you wish you'd contributed differently to the group?



Assessing Your Group's Work (continued)

- What has been your biggest challenge in the group?
- What have you learned from participating in the group?
- What are some of your personal goals for next year?

Step 3: Take a few minutes to share your reflections with one another. Sharing should be voluntary. In order to save time for the rest of the activity, people can share just one or two of their thoughts, or any major points or themes that emerged.

Tips for Effective Assessments

1. The process of getting open and honest feedback from everyone about their participation in the group—and about the group's work as a whole—is tremendously valuable; it can also be challenging. People will most likely have different takes on what happened and different ideas about how to make changes, but **it's important not to judge, accuse or get defensive.**
2. Keep in mind that **the assessment tools presented in this activity are not only for the end of the year!** You can use any or all of them to evaluate meetings, activities, projects and/or campaigns you undertake throughout the year.
3. Imagine how much more meaningful all of your efforts will be to you and future groups if you **keep a record of your work for the year.** The "Our GSA Journal" document included in the Appendix will help you to do just that!

Large-Group Discussion: Plus/Delta (10–15 minutes)

Step 1: Designate a recorder. The recorder should hang two sheets of large paper on a visible surface. At the top of one, the recorder should write a plus symbol (+), and at the top of the other, a delta symbol (Δ). The plus symbol, as you might have guessed, represents the positive aspects of working in your group and the successes the group has achieved. The delta, a symbol for change, represents the things you'd like to change about your group and what the group might do differently. The Plus/Delta is an assessment tool that helps people think about their work in a more active and creative way. Instead of saying "This worked" and "That didn't work," you take a step further to think about what needs improvement, what might have worked and how you could take a different approach in the future.

Step 2: Everyone should take turns identifying what they liked about working in the group, along with the initiatives they considered successful. The recorder should list everyone's "pluses" on the Plus sheet. Then everyone should take turns identifying aspects of the group or the group's work that they'd like to change, along with suggestions for how the work could be done differently. The recorder should list everyone's "deltas" on the Delta sheet.

Step 3: Take a few minutes to absorb and affirm everyone's comments. This is not the time to debate people's opinions but rather an opportunity to listen and reflect; regardless of whether you agree or disagree with everything that's said, it's all useful feedback.

Assessing Your Group's Work (continued)

Pairs Discussion: S.W.O.T. Analysis (10–15 minutes)

Step 1: Form pairs and distribute four sheets of loose-leaf paper and a pen to each pair. One person in the pair can do all the writing, or each person can take a turn at writing. This next part of the activity is called a S.W.O.T. analysis. "S.W.O.T." is an acronym that stands for *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats*. Many groups, from community-based organizations to large corporations, use the S.W.O.T. analysis as a tool for describing what's going on within and outside their group.

Step 2: Write "Strengths" at the top of the first sheet of paper, "Weaknesses" at the top of the second, "Opportunities" at the top of the third and "Threats" at the top of the fourth. Discuss these four areas using the questions below, and write down whatever comes to mind.



the third and "Threats" at the top of the fourth. Discuss these four areas using the questions below, and write down whatever comes to mind.

⇒ **Strengths:** What strengths does your group have? (For example: empowered leaders, active members, a strong ally network, visibility in the school)

⇒ **Weaknesses:** What weaknesses does your GSA have? (For example: low attendance at meetings, overburdened leaders, lack of funds)

⇒ **Opportunities:** What opportunities are available to your group or are expected in the future? (For example: growing student interest, expanding community awareness, groups forming at nearby schools)

⇒ **Threats:** What threats to your group exist in your school community? (For example: GSA known only as a "gay" group; vocal student, staff or community opposition; lack of resources)

Large-Group Discussion: Sharing Your S.W.O.T.s (10–15 minutes)

Reconvene as an entire group. The recorder should hang four sheets of large paper on a visible surface, labeling them as each pair did its loose-leaf sheets. The pairs should take turns contributing their conclusions, and the recorder should write each pair's ideas on the large sheets. After everyone's ideas have been recorded, discuss them, identifying common or similar ideas. Be sure to keep the Plus/Delta sheets and the S.W.O.T. sheets in a safe place so that the group can revisit them when you gather in the fall or over the summer. See Activity 8.2 for ideas on how to stay connected!

Staying **Connected, Informed** and **Involved**

What are your
goals for
your group's
future?

Ready... We've heard from lots of student organizers that they're frustrated by the feeling of starting from scratch every autumn. While new members and new leaders are inevitable—and desirable!—the summer vacation months don't have to mean a complete hiatus for your group. In fact, the summer can provide a perfect opportunity to stay active by doing all the things you didn't have time to do during the school year, such as reading LGBT resources, tracking LGBT news or just hanging out and supporting one another.

Set... **People:** Entire group, working first in smaller groups, then as a whole
Tools: Large paper (6–8 sheets), markers (just a few), tape
Time: 45–60 minutes

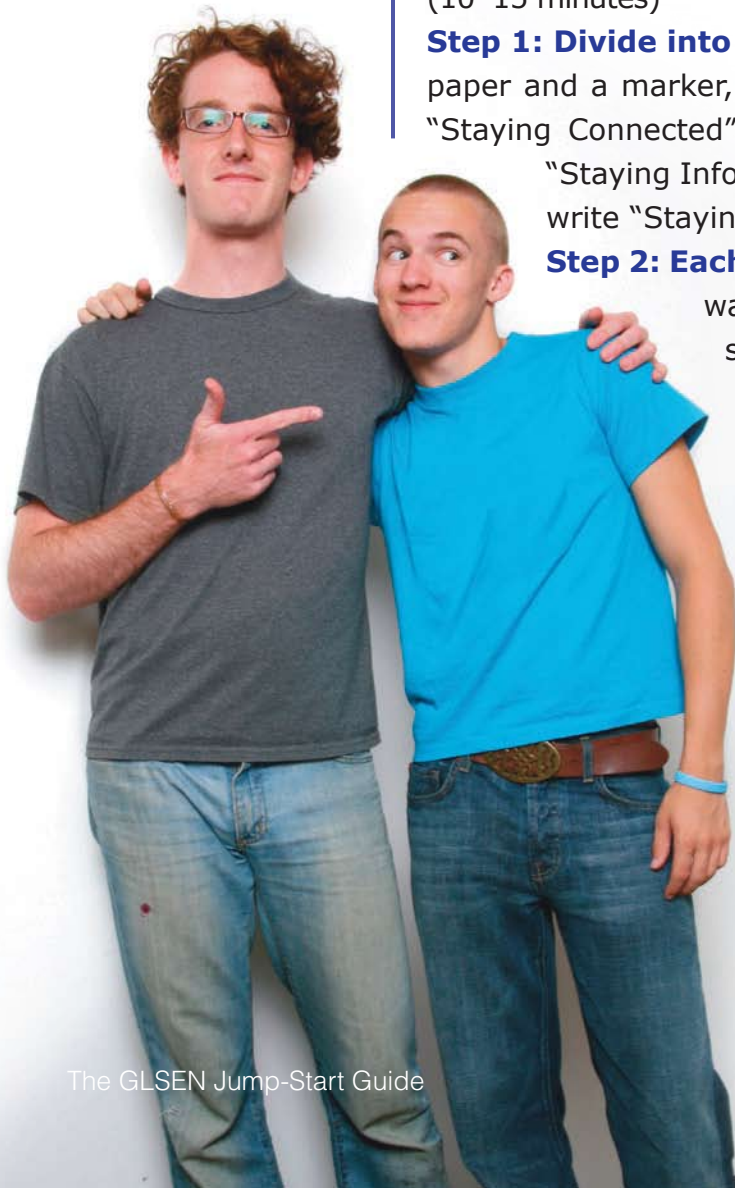
GO! **Small-Group Brainstorm: Identifying Ways to Stay Active**
(10–15 minutes)

Step 1: Divide into three groups. Each group should get a sheet of paper and a marker, and designate a recorder. Group 1 should write "Staying Connected" at the top of its sheet, Group 2 should write "Staying Informed" at the top of its sheet, and Group 3 should write "Staying Involved" at the top of its sheet.

Step 2: Each group should now brainstorm a list of all the ways that members might fulfill the goal on their sheet. Write down everything that comes to mind, even ideas that don't seem feasible. Consider the following questions:

Staying Connected: How can we ensure that we stay in touch over the summer? For example: set up a phone tree or e-mail distribution list; subscribe to GLSEN's GSATalk and AdvisorTalk e-mail listservs (*see box on next page for details*); gather for food/coffee/activities to check in.

Staying Informed: How can we stay clued in to LGBT and safe schools news? For example: visit GLSEN's website to read about safe schools news and new resources; read other LGBT and/or student activism Web resources; subscribe to LGBT and/or youth organizations' newsletters.



Staying Connected . . . (continued)

Staying Involved: How can we use our organizing experience and build new skills? For example: volunteer, intern or work at a local advocacy organization or service agency for LGBT people and/or youth; attend community events, conferences and trainings; organize for Pride.

Large-Group Discussion: What We'll Do On Our Summer Vacation
(15–20 minutes)

Step 1: Reconvene as a large group and designate a recorder. The recorder should hang the three brainstorm lists side by side on a visible surface. Take a few minutes for everyone to read and think about the lists as a whole.

Step 2: Discuss people's ideas, beginning with the "Staying Connected" list. How might you put these ideas into action? How can you divide up specific responsibilities so that no one feels overburdened, everyone is doing something they will be able to accomplish and enjoy and everyone feels a sense of involvement and accountability to the group? Similarly, discuss the ideas on

the "Staying Informed" and "Staying Involved" lists. The recorder should write down people's names next to the tasks they've agreed to do.

Step 3: Choose a volunteer to write or type up a final list of projects and specific tasks with the names and contact information of those responsible for them. Revisit this list at your next meeting. Everyone should have their own copy to refer to over the summer.

Large-Group Brainstorm: Preparing for Next Year (20–25 minutes)

It's often difficult to predict what your group will look like in the fall, since new students may join and current members may decide not to return. Even though you may wish to leave specific decisions open until new members can provide input, you can certainly begin to think about, discuss and plan your work for next year. Use the results of your assessment to help guide your ideas.

Step 1: Hang three new sheets of paper side by side. The recorder should label the first sheet "Goals," the second sheet "Activities" and the third sheet "People."

How to Join the Conversation

To subscribe to GLSEN's **GSATalk** and **AdvisorTalk** listservs, register online at www.studentorganizing.org. These discussion forums allow subscribers to connect and network with hundreds of GSA members and faculty advisors.

To learn more about GLSEN trainings and events, click on the "Events" and "News" links at www.glsen.org. Also continue to check out the "Students and GSA" section for information about youth-specific events. Visit www.studentorganizing.org for more details.

Staying **Connected** . . . (continued)

Goals: What are some broad goals you can set for next year? Will you be continuing initiatives you began this year or starting something new? What kind(s) of work do you want the group to focus on next year? Be sure to distinguish between **internal goals** for your group, such as building trust and cooperation, and **external goals**, such as raising the group’s visibility in your school.

Activities: Based on your experiences this year and your broad goals for next year, what are some activities you’d like the group to do? What worked and didn’t work this year? What did you really want to do but didn’t have enough time to tackle? “Activities” can include what your group does

during its meeting time, events your group plans for the larger school community and ongoing tasks that members do on their own time to further group goals.

People: What kinds of relationships with people does your group hope to build next year? What are some ideas for finding new members? What do you want the leadership of your group to look like? With which other school groups or individuals does your group want to connect and/or work? Whom do you need as an ally in order to accomplish your goals?



Step 2: Brainstorm a “wish list” for each of the three themes, using the information you gathered in your assessment and the above questions. Try to put at least five ideas on each list. The recorder should write everything down as it was stated.

Step 3: Instead of going the usual route of narrowing down the lists and making decisions about them, let the ideas develop for a while. A volunteer who plans to return to the group next year should type up the three lists and make copies for everyone to read over the summer. If you are able to meet as a group during the summer, make some space in your meeting for revisiting these ideas, adding to them or changing them, but don’t omit anything until you’ve opened up the conversation to new members in the fall. In addition, each returning member of the group should agree to spend some time over the summer thinking about next year’s work and making any additions they’d like to see on the brainstorm lists.

Step 4: Celebrate! Plan a group party to acknowledge the achievements, leaders, volunteers and allies of the past year. You might devote some time during the party to a round-robin in which each group member reflects on highlights and memorable moments of your work together.

Looking Forward, Looking Back

We hope that this guide has provoked **reflection, inspiration and action** in your group

We hope that *The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide* has provoked reflection, conversation, inspiration and action in your group. Collaboration can be as exhausting as it is exciting, and it's always important to remember what unites the members of your group, even as you remain conscious of your distinct perspectives. Your commitment to working as a group to improve your school community is phenomenal—and as you know, victories are much sweeter when shared, so do your best to support one another in fulfilling your goals! Remember that GLSEN's Student Organizing Department is here to help you, too.

As we mentioned in the Welcome letter, feedback and suggestions are always welcome. We encourage you to e-mail us at jumpstart@glsen.org, and we applaud your efforts to make schools safer and more inclusive for all students!



Our

GSA

Journal

Group Name _____

Year _____

**This journal can help your group to document its history and activities.
By filling it out, *you'll* be creating a resource for your own reference,
and for the benefit of future groups engaged in similar work.**

Be sure to insert extra pages as needed, and to make multiple copies!

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Special Thanks To

**Middleton High School's GSA
Middleton, Wisconsin**

For sharing the idea for this resource!

About Our GSA

Name of Group

School

Address

City _____ State _____

Email _____

Website _____

Meetings

When _____

Where _____

Average # of Attendees _____ # of Members _____

Student Organizers

Name

Safe Contact Information

Faculty Advisors

Name

Safe Contact Information

Our Glorious History

Though you may not have thought beyond this year, everything your group does should be helping to build a lasting, active presence in your school. By filling out this page, you not only can preserve the history of your group, but also help to guide future groups whose experiences working together may be similar to yours. Be sure to keep a copy of this page in a safe place for your own records, so that you can keep the original in this book, passing it along year after year to each new set of organizers.

When did this group start?

Who started this group?

What prompted this group to start?

What obstacles did this group face trying to start?

What assistance did this group receive when trying to start?

What are your dreams for this group?



Founder

Mission Possible!

Mission Statement

Who participates in your group? What is your group's vision for your school community? What is the purpose of your group?

Major Goals

What do you want to accomplish this year, both within your group and in the larger school community? What smaller goals can bring you closer to your larger goals?

Goal 1 _____

Short-Term Goal A _____

Short-Term Goal B _____

Goal 2 _____

Short-Term Goal A _____

Short-Term Goal B _____

Goal 3 _____

Short-Term Goal A _____

Short-Term Goal B _____

Contacts

Everyone who expresses interest in your work and/or participates in an activity you've organized is someone whose contact information you should have on record. The number one reason GSAs don't continue from year to year is not opposition, but rather dwindling interest from allies. How do you maintain the commitment of your contacts? By keeping in touch with them and keeping them informed! Contacts need to know what's going on and how important their contribution is to your work. Otherwise, you could fall into a classic trap where you think, "We don't want to bother them, they don't seem that interested anyway..." and they think, "I haven't heard anything in a while, I guess they don't really need my help..."

When compiling a contacts list, consider grouping contacts into sections that might help you to manage their information better, or creating a separate list for each grouping in addition to a larger, comprehensive list. Contact groupings could include "Members," "Student Allies," "Student Clubs and Organizations," "Teacher and Administrator Allies," "Community Allies – Individual," "Community Allies – Group," Media," "Donors," "Local and National Organizations," and so on. In the "Relationship to Our Group" column, be sure to include details such as: dates they attended meetings, events they attended, petitions they signed, donations they provided, projects they collaborated on, articles they wrote, and so on.

Remember to request and use only **safe** contact information!

<i>Group Contacts: As of [Insert Date of Last Update]</i>				
Name	Phone	Email	Mailing Address	Relationship to Our Group

Meeting Activities, Projects and Events

How did you use your meeting time this year? What projects and events did you organize? By keeping a record of exactly what you did and the outcomes, you'll have a store of ideas that will help to stimulate your thinking in the fall, and to guide future groups as they begin to plan their own work. Be sure to include the name, date, description and outcome of each activity, project or event you mention.

Useful Resources

Resources can include printed materials such as books, magazines, manuals and pamphlets; audio and video resources; and, don't forget email listservs and web-based resources!

Current Resources			
Name of Resource	How We Got It	How We've Used It	Comments

Resource Wish List	
What Do We Want?	How Do We Plan to Get It?