

## **A New Club Joins Apollo's Activity List**

*(from the student newspaper at Apollo HS, April 13, 2007)*

by Kisandrea Jones

This year during the second trimester, Apollo Sr High formed a new club called the GSA, which is short for "Gay Straight Alliance". The two teachers that [advise] the GSA are Jason Parker, the band teacher, and Emily Maeckelbergh, a Special Ed teacher.

When the Apollo GSA put up posters to announce their first meeting, several students in the building tore them down.

"It's a discrimination against GLBT (Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender) people," said Timothy Jones, who is a senior this year.

Right now, there really isn't that much going on in the group. "Because this is the first year, we're just deciding what we're going to do with the group," said Maeckelburgh.

The Mission Statement for the Apollo GSA is: The Apollo GSA will bring together people of all sexual orientations and will create a supportive safe environment for the group to have fun, fight homophobia and raise awareness in our school and community.

On February 20th, 11 of the students, Parker, and Maeckelbergh went to a conference at the Art School in Minneapolis called "Q-quest".

"Q-quest is a conference where the students from different schools learn about GSA and GLBT youth issues," said Maeckelburgh. There were many different workshop the students could go to.

Katherine Podvin, who is a senior this year, went to one about Transgender Rights. "This lady said that if you write down asking that you want to be called a different name, and if the teacher refuses to call you that name, it's against your rights," said Podvin.

On April 18th, the Apollo GSA will be doing the "Day of Silence." The Day of Silence is where people are silenced for the day because they believe that it is the first step to fighting injustices.

The Apollo GSA invites you to join them in their Day of Silence to help take that first step.

In addition to formation of the GSA club, interested staff were invited to attend "Safe Space" training on Monday, March 26th. The purpose of the training was to inform staff of the issues facing GKBT students. Staff who participated were invited to put rainbow stickers in their room to show students that the teacher has been trained on the issues and is willing to be supportive of it.

"Safe Space training is not intended to be a promotion of any perceived agenda," according to guidance counselor Rick Larson. "The training is done so that we as a school can be supportive of all of our students."

If any student is interested in attending a GSA meeting, just listen to the announcements.

Note: Students who participated in the “Day of Silence” carried the following card around with them that day, and shared it with those who wanted to know the purpose of the action and the day.

**What are you going to do to end the silence?**

Please understand my reasons for not speaking today.

I am participating in the Day of Silence, a national youth movement protesting the silence faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and their allies. My deliberate silence echoes that silence, which is caused by harassment, prejudice, and discrimination. I believe that ending the silence is the first step toward fighting these injustices. Think about the voices you are not hearing today.