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empowering youth to fight homophobia and transphobia in schools

Durfee Foundation awards Gay-Straight Alliance Network \$300,000 to prevent bullying in Southern California schools

LOS ANGELES, October 29, 2008 – The Durfee Foundation of Los Angeles awarded \$300,000 to Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA Network), a statewide organization based in San Francisco that supports and empowers youth activists facing homophobia and transphobia in school. The grant, which will be paid over three years, will allow GSA Network to expand its safe schools work in Southern California.

GSA Network currently supports 678 student-run Gay-Straight Alliance clubs in California, representing 50% of the state's high schools and impacting more than 1.1 million students annually. Thanks to the Durfee Foundation's award, GSA Network recently opened a satellite office in Los Angeles, where Program Coordinator Daniel E. Solis now provides leadership training and direct support to students facing harassment at school based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

Solis offers free GSA Leadership Trainings for students in each of the nine counties of Southern California – San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego, and Imperial. The group has connected with over 300 student-run GSA clubs in the region. "GSA Network's mission is to insure that every California school is a safe place for all students, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation," said founder and Executive Director, Carolyn Laub. "We greatly appreciate the Durfee Foundation's leadership on this critical issue."

The Durfee Foundation is named in honor of the late Dorothy Durfee Avery who established the foundation in 1960 with her husband, the late R. Stanton Avery. Since that time, the Foundation has awarded more than \$25 million in grants in the areas of arts and culture, education and community development, primarily in the Los Angeles region. Durfee has supported Los Angeles based LGBT nonprofits through the Durfee Gay and Lesbian Fund for almost ten years.

Durfee's recent grant to GSA Network represents the Foundations' largest gift to an LGBT organization in its history. "Durfee provided modest, start-up funds to GSA Network in its first year of operation, based largely on the promising leadership of Carolyn Laub," said Halina Avery, Durfee trustee. "We are astonished -- but not surprised! -- at the organization's rapid growth since that time, and we are thrilled to now make this deeper commitment to help them establish a full-time presence in Los Angeles, contributing not only to the wellbeing of our LGBT youth, but to the continuing vibrancy and diversity of LA's nonprofit sector."

GSA Network will celebrate its 10th Anniversary on November 13, 2008 at the San Francisco Hilton. For more information, contact Carolyn Laub, Executive Director, 415-552-4229.

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