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NEA honors GSAFE with human and civil rights award

GSAFE is among a dozen recipients of the prestigious NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards

HOUSTON—For its work with Wisconsin students, educators, and community members to create safe educational environments for LGBTQ students, GSAFE is this year’s recipient of the Virginia Uribe Award for Creative Leadership in Human Rights.

“GSAFE revolutionized the ways that LGBTQ students are understood in Wisconsin schools,” said NEA President Lily Eskelsen García “We are proud to recognize the immense progress they have made and will continue to make. GSAFE’s efforts to create more inclusive schools are exciting and uplifting.”

GSafe ensures that hundreds of Wisconsin schools have access to reliable programs and spaces for students of all sexualities to express themselves and feel comfortable. Each year, GSAFE works with educators, providing them with the tools to navigate issues of identity and sexual orientation in their classrooms and within school communities.

Additionally, GSAFE has introduced creative measures to uplift LGBTQ students, especially students of color, in their classrooms. GSAFE launched Foundations of Leadership (FOL), an innovative class for “advanced learners” in the area of leadership, which celebrates the leadership of LGBTQ youth of color who often are underrepresented from “advanced learner” courses.

The Foundations of Leadership project has expanded in unique ways, and currently provides one-on-one instruction for youth experiencing suspension and/or incarceration. This FOL initiative is especially important, since Wisconsin and particularly the city of Madison, where FOL program is located, have some of the highest rates of suspension, expulsion, and incarceration of youth of color.

GSafe’s initiatives provide essential resources to creating more just school environments for LGBTQ youth and young people of color. Thanks to their advocacy and dedication, more than half of Wisconsin school districts have gender-inclusive policies, making schools safer and more supportive.

GSAFE was one out of 12 outstanding social justice heroes honored at NEA’s 2019 NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards, which took place on July 3, in Houston, Texas. Click on [link](#) to view video tribute of GSAFE.

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