

L.A. youth teacher's guide

Publishing Schedule

L.A. Youth will arrive between Nov. 14-21

Key to using the November - December 2007 issue:

ARTICLE and PAGE NUMBER	KEY TEACHING POINTS
<p>My mom rules at home and school p. 5 Samantha was nervous when her mom first started working at her school, but actually it's not so bad.</p>	<p>Have you ever felt like your parents became too involved in your life? How can parents be supportive but still give you space?</p>
<p>My third place pp. 6-7 Essay contest winners say their old neighborhood, a skateboarding spot and a place near school are their favorite places to "get away."</p>	<p>What's your favorite place to just be yourself? What do you do there and how does this place help you?</p>
<p>COVER STORY Listen up! pp. 8-9 As an AIDS educator Sasha wants teens to know they could be at risk and how to protect themselves from the disease.</p>	<p>How much do you know about HIV and AIDS? What can people do to protect themselves?</p>
<p>AIDS in Africa pp. 10-11 After helping people in countries ravaged by AIDS, Olivia wants to dedicate her life to stopping the disease.</p>	<p>If you could work to fix any problem in the world, what would it be and why? How can teens try to help solve problems now?</p>
<p>I love to watch wrestling pp. 12-13 The outrageous characters and storylines provide Nidia the perfect escape from the stress of school.</p>	<p>What's your favorite way to escape from stresses or problems? How does this help you?</p>
<p>My Los Angeles pp. 14-15 Teen artists express what about the city they live in inspires or influences them.</p>	<p>What are some things that you love about Los Angeles? What kinds of diversity do you see in the city?</p>
<p>Driving on sunshine pp. 16-17 It was exciting and challenging for Chris to build a solar-powered car that doesn't pollute.</p>	<p>Why is it important to decrease car exhaust in the atmosphere? How can teens help the environment?</p>
<p>Embracing diversity pp. 20-21 The friends Victoria has made at her small, integrated school have helped her overcome her prejudices.</p>	<p>What are the benefits of a racially diverse school? How can schools promote tolerance?</p>
<p>I couldn't take it anymore pp. 24-25 After more than a year of being harassed at school for being gay, Tray found a way to make it stop.</p>	<p>See lesson plan on p. 2.</p>
<p>I don't like your dog, OK? p. 26 Shannon has always been uncomfortable around dogs, but pushy dog owners really drive her crazy.</p>	<p>How can friends deal with having different tastes? How far should they go to respect each other's boundaries?</p>
<p>CD reviews p. 27 Our writers review the latest CDs from Kanye West, Feist and H.I.M.</p>	<p>Who are your favorite recording artists? What makes them your favorites?</p>

Hateful words

A lesson plan based on “I couldn’t take it anymore” by Trayvione Travis from the November-December 2007 issue of L.A. Youth. In this story, Trayvione describes the harassment he and other gay students faced at school and how he was able to make it stop.

By Amanda Riddle, Editor

Grades: 6-12

Subjects: Language arts, life skills

Suggested time allowance: 45 min.-1 hr.

Overview: In this lesson students will discuss how to recognize and combat homophobia and discrimination in their own lives, schools and communities.

Objective:

Students will discuss ways to combat homophobia and discrimination.

Resources and material:

- pens, paper
- copies of L.A. Youth article “I couldn’t take it anymore” (one per student)
- white board or chalkboard

Activities:

1. Write “discrimination” on the board. Have each student write a list of forms of discrimination, then ask them to share what they wrote and write their ideas on the board. They may say people are discriminated against based on race, gender, religion, ethnicity, their interests, sexual orientation, disability, etc. Ask them what ways people are discriminated against. They may say name calling, teasing, being treated unfairly, being ignored, being excluded from activities, or physical and verbal attacks. Ask them how they feel about the way people are treated because of their differences. Is it fair?

2. Reading and discussion. Have students read Trayvione’s story, “I couldn’t take it anymore,” about being harassed at his school because he is gay on pages 24-25

of the November-December issue of L.A. Youth.

Discussion questions.

How were Trayvione and the other gay students at his school treated because of their sexuality?

--They were called names, such as “gay boy” and “faggot” almost every day.

--The other students didn’t try to get to know them.

How did Trayvione and the other students respond to the harassment?

--Trayvione usually fought back and got in-school suspension.

--The other gay students wouldn’t say anything and ignored the teasing.

--Trayvione talked to an adult at school he could trust, his teacher’s aide Michelle. She listened to him and said the teachers were doing all they could to make the name-calling stop.

--Trayvione didn’t tell other adults, like the staff at his group home, because he didn’t think they could help since it was a school issue.

How did teachers and administrators respond? Was it enough?

--A teacher who heard a student saying gay slurs to Trayvione told the student to stop, but it didn’t work.

--The teachers told the students to stop the name-calling and sometimes sent them to the dean’s office or gave them in-school suspension, but didn’t suspend them.

What events eventually led to a change at the school?

--Trayvione watched a video about the Stonewall Riots, in which gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer people in New York fought for their rights. He felt like he should stand up for his rights, too.

--He told one of the staff members at his group home, and she told him that what was happening to him at school was sexual harassment and against the law.

--He shared the information about sexual harassment with people at his school,

which led them to take more serious action.

3. Discussion: homophobia at school

What is homophobia? What are some examples of actions, language or attitudes that discriminate against LGBTQ people? What do you think about such discrimination? Is it OK for people to be discriminated against or suffer harassment or violence because of their sexual orientation? Why or why not? What actions can be taken to combat homophobia and discrimination at school?

4. Writing assignment: After reading “I couldn’t take it anymore,” and reflecting on the subsequent discussion in class, write a personal essay about how you feel about homophobia and discrimination against gay people. How did you feel about Trayvione’s experience and the opinions and comments from other students in class? How can people’s discriminatory attitudes about gay and lesbian people be changed, if at all? What can be done at your school to make it a more positive place for gay students?

Extension activity

Ask students to research ways to create a more positive school environment for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, using these resources.

-- More than 90 percent of teens nationally hear other kids at school or in their neighborhood use words like “fag,” “homo,” “dyke,” “queer” or “gay” at least once in a while, with half hearing them every day, according to the Safe Schools Coalition. Encourage your school to participate in No Name-Calling Week, Jan. 21-25, 2008, which aims to end name-calling of all kinds. Info at www.nonamecallingweek.org/

-- The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) has information on how to start a gay-straight alliance at your school to promote tolerance. www.glsenla.org

-- <http://project10.org>

-- www.safeschoolscoalition.org/safe.html



Would you like a speaker from L.A. Youth?

Editors Laura Lee and Mike Francano speak about journalism, current events, working as a reporter, how to be a better writer and how students can get involved in L.A. Youth.

Call Laura or Mike at (323) 938-9194 or e-mail llee@layouth.com or mfricano@layouth.com.

THANKS TO TEACHERS who contributed letters to the editor and essays: Jolie Augustine, Wilson MS in Glendale; Jacquie Hartt, East Valley HS in North Hollywood; May Lynn Castillo, Miguel Contreras Learning Complex; Trisha Lutero and Mike Dean, Jefferson HS; Heather Buchta and Salli Hale, Gardena HS; Hazel Witham, Daniel Webster MS in Whittier; Yesenia Fonesca, Edwards MS; Christina Hernandez-Camacho, Huntington Park College Ready Academy HS; San Gabriel HS.

**Teens:
Join the
staff of
L.A.
Youth**
*the newspaper
written by and
about teens*



Next Newcomer's Orientation: **Saturday, Dec. 8, 11 a.m. - noon** at
L.A. Youth at 5967 W. Third Street Suite 301, L.A. 90036 *(between Fairfax and La Brea)*

Call Amanda, Laura or Mike at (323) 938-9194

L.A. youth

IS MOVING AND NEEDS YOUR HELP

As a teacher who receives L.A. Youth and supports what we do, we urgently need your support. We lost our lease and must relocate our office. Your support will help us relocate without disrupting our journalism training program and the quality of the publication you receive six times a year. Your donation will be applied to our anticipated moving expenses, which include first and last month's rent, security deposit, facility upgrades and equipment and furnishing costs.

Please consider sending us a tax-deductible contribution to help defray our moving costs. Thank you!

YES, I would like to donate \$20 or more to help defray moving costs for L.A. Youth.

Name _____

School _____

School Phone _____

Ext. _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip code _____

E-mail _____

Make check payable to L.A. Youth

Mail to: L.A. Youth

5967 W. Third St. Suite 301

Los Angeles CA 90036