

For Immediate Release

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ORANGE COUNTY 2014 NO NAME-CALLING WEEK ANNOUNCED

MIDDLETOWN – Schools and youth serving organizations throughout Orange County have declared January 20-24, 2014 as **Orange County No Name-Calling Week**. The prevalence and severity of bullying and harassment among youth has gained national attention in recent years. Educators, parents, mentors and service providers will conduct activities aimed at stemming the tide of name calling and promoting respect for all in Orange County communities.

Orange County No Name-Calling Week is being sponsored by the Cultural Equity Taskforce (CET) in Orange County in partnership with the Orange County Executive's Office, Orange County Legislature, Orange-Ulster BOCES, Orange County Youth Bureau, Orange County Department of Mental Health, Orange County Department of Social Services, Orange County Probation Department, Orange County System of Care, and Joint Membership of Health and Community Agencies (JMHCA).

CET is a group of human service providers and community members committed to promoting the fair, just and equitable delivery of publicly funded services to the people of Orange County. The group operates on the fundamental principle that it is the right of every culture to express itself, develop and thrive in an environment free from oppression.

"Ownership of issues around youth safety must come from the community at large," said **Nadia Allen**, Executive Director, Mental Health Association in Orange County and Chair, Cultural Equity Taskforce in Orange County. **No Name-Calling Week** provides an opportunity to promote respect, build self-control, confidence and resilience to bullying, both in and out of school settings.

We are pleased to announce that Orange County Executive **Steven M. Neuhaus** will recognize and proclaim **January 20-24, 2014 as Orange County No Name-Calling Week**.

The fourth of its kind in Orange County, this countywide effort to address bullying and harassment emanated from a "Safe Schools Roundtable" convened by GLSEN Hudson Valley and the Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center in Kingston. For over four years, community and school district leaders have come together to develop projects that address the issues of bullying and safety in our communities.

We believe that a little more kindness can go a long way toward fundamentally changing the name-calling and bullying cultures in our schools, especially when a foundation of respect is taught in elementary school. That's why GLSEN is introducing a new theme for [No Name-Calling Week](#): Celebrate Kindness

For the past four years, we have encouraged schools, youth programs, faith communities, service organizations and the entire community to participate in No Name-Calling Week. Only by teaching respect and encouraging kindness throughout our communities can we eradicate bullying and harassment in our schools.

The County Executives of Dutchess, Orange and Ulster have lent support to a Hudson Valley-wide "No Name-Calling Week" through proclamations and press conferences.

Schools and organizations participate by providing opportunities for classroom discussions, special events and information sharing, and by encouraging students to speak out about bullying. Week-long activities throughout the Hudson Valley will culminate on Friday, January 24th with a Student Creative Expression Exhibit to be hosted at Ulster BOCES in Port Ewen, NY.

Learn more about the project at www.nonamecallingweek.org

IT'S A FACT.....

Verbal bullying is the most frequent form of bullying experienced by both boys and girls.

96 percent of New York students regularly hear the word "gay" used in a negative way in school, such as "that's so gay" and "you're so gay".

66 percent of New York students report that people at school are harassed at least sometimes because of their looks or body size.

Both boys and girls report that they had been bullied away from school sometimes or weekly.

Bullying creates a climate of fear and disrespect in schools and has a negative impact on student learning.