

[Subscribe](#)

[Past Issues](#)

[Translate](#) ▼



It's back to school time!

The air is getting crisper and cooler, a tell-tale sign that this year's

[The Aspen Foundation for Labour Education](#) has exciting opportunities

learning journey is underway for Alberta's teachers and students.

to engage student with the things that matter!



Applications are Open!

[Please visit our website](#) to apply for our Social Justice Learning Grants. Up to \$1500 is available to support projects which engage Alberta's students in projects that make our communities stronger! Applications are due on October 2nd, 2018.

Rural Life and a GSA

Cayla Martin, Registered Provisional Psychologist, FRW, Delia School

The Creation of a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) is a K-12, 150-student, rural school like the Delia, Alberta is a rewarding, if a little challenging journey. The GSA began at the request of one high school student to myself (a Family Resource Worker) in the Spring of 2015. After talking with a few other students and holding a "What is a GSA?" open meeting, we began with a small group of five. There is truth to the saying that "if you have food, people will come," and snacks and treats have become a staple at our meetings. Being the first GSA in our school division meant that we were starting from scratch and the use of guide books and websites such as [GSAs and QSAs in Alberta Schools: A Guide for Teachers](#) created by the ATA, [Supporting Transgender and Transexual Students in K-12 Schools: A Guide for Educators](#) created by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, [The Safe Zone Project](#), and the GSA Network's [Advisor Handbook](#) became helpful tools. The pioneering students of Delia were also a huge support. They were willing to take a risk and face some

courageous conversations in support of a cause they felt strongly about. We were also greatly supported by our school division in the creation of our GSA, which was a wonderful help.

Beginning steps included talks about goals, confidentiality, and deciding as a group if we wanted to be a support group, an advocacy group, or a combination of the two. Our GSA chose the latter. Regarding support, our members identified a communal goal of being a place that **“accepts everyone as they are and provides a place to be heard.”** In terms of advocacy, the students have taken on a number of projects over the years including creating school bulletin boards to help others question their misconceptions, and heteronormative language. They have also held a school-wide lunch, a bake sale, a cookies and milk sale, a week of morning announcements in support of Mental Health Week focusing on decreasing the stigma of seeking help, and a Christmas themed “Positivi-tree Project” which included having all Jr/Sr high students write a kind card to another student which were then hung on trees with candy canes. Currently, we have a guest speaker and a mural project in the works, supported by grant funding from the Aspen Foundation. The GSA was also featured in our division-wide newsletter, Prairie Land Pride, highlighting our important role as the first GSA in the division.

While our GSA began as the work of Dr. Kristopher Wells became a focus for educational professional across Alberta, our road has not always been a straightforward one. How our rural communities fit into this discussion has been an interesting consideration to see develop within our school group.

Stigmas around LGBTQ issues still remain prevalent and due to time restraints and conflicting priorities, our GSA meetings really fluctuate in frequency. Despite this, it is important to note that a GSA can be as few as 2 members and it only takes a bit of passion and interest to revitalize or create a GSA. It is very encouraging that another school in our division is beginning to create their own GSA and we hope that this trend continues.

New Teaching Resource!

Check out Aspen Foundation's new teaching resource: *Unpacking Poverty & Inequality Through Spoken Word*. This resource includes activities designed to link with the Social Studies 9 Alberta curriculum.

The full resource is [available to download free from the Aspen website](#).

ENGAGED LEARNING
THROUGH THE ARTS:
A Grade 9
Social Studies
Resource

UNPACKING
Poverty &
Inequality
THROUGH SPOKEN WORD



at: www.afle.ca - aspen teaching units



Upcoming Events

September 26 - [International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons](#)

September 27 - [World Tourism Day](#)

September 30 - [Orange Shirt Day](#)

October - [Healthy Workplace Month](#)

October 1 - [International Day of Older Persons](#)

October 1 - [World Habitat Day](#)

October 5 - [United Nations' World Teachers' Day](#)

October 10 - [World Mental Health Day](#)

October 11 - [International Day of the Girl Child](#)

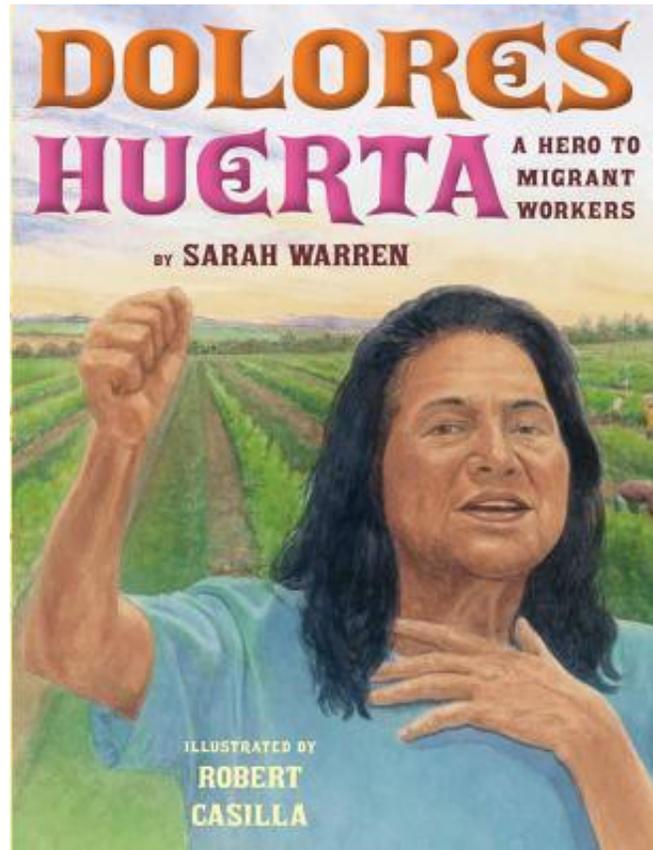
October 16 - [World Food Day](#)

October 17 - [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#)

October 24 - [United Nations Day](#)

November 16 - [International Day for Tolerance](#)

November 20 - [Universal Children's Day](#)



Resources

Article: [26 Children's Books to Support Conversations on Race, Racism, and Resistance](#)

Documentary: [The Hand That Feeds](#)

Resource List: [Kids' Help Phone Tools and Resources about bullying, online safety, emotional health, and more](#)

Resource List: [Orange Shirt Day Lesson Plans](#) from the Manitoba Teachers' Society

Article: [Read Alberta Education's draft K-4 curriculum](#)

Resource List: [Mental Health Resources for Teachers](#) from Children's Mental Health Ontario

Video: [Why Unions Matter with Dolores Huerta](#)

Copyright © 2018 All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:
11 Bonin Place
Leduc, AB T9E 6H6

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.