What is an Ally?

An ally is an individual that stands up for the rights of LGBTQ students and works to create change for safe schools. Alongside their peers, allies are striving to support all students regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. They may be collaborating with their fellow students to destroy stereotypes, hateful language, and bullying in the school environment.

What is Ally Week?

Ally Week is a weeklong celebration, in which students prepare and organize events and activities that acknowledge the importance of identifying, supporting individuals that are allies. These activities are typically initiated by the students, but that doesn’t mean that you can’t be involved!

Why do we need an Ally Week?

We need an ally week to show appreciation to the individuals that have dedicated their time and efforts towards achieving the ultimate goal of helping to create safe schools for all students.
Who started Ally Week?

GLSEN (the gay, lesbian, straight, education network) was established in 1990 and is striving to help create safe schools. The overall objective of GLSEN is to help all youth to respect one another regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity or gender expression. Since the first Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) began, GLSEN has provided support for students who are trying to put an end to bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity in their schools.

GLSEN's Jump-Start National Student Leadership Team created Ally Week in 2005. They wanted to recognize and celebrate the Allies that have shown dedication to helping to create safe and effective schools for all and to encourage students to take action. The idea turned into the first Ally Week celebrated in schools nationwide in October 2005.

GLSEN has tons of resources for youth and educators, including professional trainings, online resources, and so much more! Check out [http://glsen.org/pittsburgh-chapter/allyweek](http://glsen.org/pittsburgh-chapter/allyweek).

What happens during Ally Week?

Students may organize activities that will commemorate this event! You can show support and encouragement by acknowledging the importance of these activities and providing assistance. Here are some examples of what students may do:

- Presentations to Students and Presentations to Staff
- GSA Collaborations with other GSAs
- Student Clubs
- Display Cases
- Daily Announcements
- Lunchtime Discussions
- Film Screenings
- Ally 101 Workshops
- Information Tables

For more information, please go to [www.glsenpgh.org](http://www.glsenpgh.org)