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HARRY POTTER ALLIANCE CASTS PROTECTIVE SHIELD SPELL WITH TRANS COMMUNITY IN NEW PROTEGO CAMPAIGN

This summer, the Harry Potter Alliance is kicking off a campaign to empower transgender people, educate cisgender people on how to be effective allies, and provides resources for everyone to create safe spaces for transgender people at the individual, community, and policy level. Named Protego for the protective shield spell used in the Harry Potter series, the campaign is dedicated to equipping fans with the resources to make the world better for the trans community.

Among HPA chapter organizers, 8% identify as transgender. The HPA has long served as a safe community for young people of all gender and sexual identities to take action on causes that they care about. As such, the HPA is uniquely suited to help the world learn how to be safer and more inclusive of this increasingly visible community.

The visibility of transgender people and issues has indeed skyrocketed in recent years. Increased visibility is a wonderful opportunity for more trans people to find their community and for the world to learn more about the issues - like healthcare, education, violence, employment, and housing - that impact the lives of trans people. Unfortunately, it is also an opportunity for dark forces, like misinformation, prejudice, and discriminatory legislation to gather. Over 20 state legislatures are currently considering anti-trans bills, from “religious freedom bills” that support LGBTQ discrimination, to the so-called “bathroom bills” that prevent transgender individuals from using public restrooms that align with their gender identity.

Protego launched on June 1st, 2016 to celebrate Pride and to counter the dark forces of anti-trans bigotry and inequality. At thehpalliance.org/protego, fans and visitors will be able to download the Protego toolkit, which features actions that anyone can take to make the world safer for the trans community. The toolkit includes ideas for actions fans can take on the individual level (like examining personal biases and language use), community level (like planning trans-inclusive events and campaigning for gender-neutral restrooms), and policy level (like contacting lawmakers or planning a peaceful protest). Each week, HPA's social media will feature writing and YouTube videos from trans creators about the importance and logistics of implementing these actions. At thehpalliance.org/protego, fans can also sign up to receive urgent action emails about pro- or anti-trans legislation in their state. Fans will also have access to numerous resources from trans advocate organizations like Trans Student Educational Resources, the National Center for Transgender Equality, and the American Civil Liberties Union.

The task of making the world safer can be a daunting one, but wizard activists know that they can win. Through the HPA, young people have donated 300,000 books to literacy organizations worldwide, organized over 20,000 Youtube video creators and fans to advocate for net neutrality, made over 3,000 phone calls for marriage equality, and convinced Warner Bros to switch their Harry Potter chocolates to Fair Trade/UTZ-certified sources. Wizard activists have and will continue to change the world for the better.

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The Harry Potter Alliance (www.thehpalliance.org) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that takes an out-of-the-box approach to civic engagement. We're changing the world by making activism accessible to young people through the power of story. Since 2005, we've engaged millions of young people to become like the heroes they read about through our work for equality, human rights, and literacy.