

Morristown marchers: 'Enough' violence
150 gather at Green to protest bigotry alleged to be behind Calif.
kid's death

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MORRISTOWN -- A crowd of 150 assembled at the Church of the Redeemer in Morristown on Sunday afternoon to march around the Green with a simple message: "Enough is enough."



The march was organized by the Rev. Phillip Dana Wilson and the Rev. Melissa Hall, leaders of the Church of the Redeemer on South Street to memorialize Lawrence King, a 15-year-old boy who was shot during his English class in California last month for reportedly dressing in a feminine manner.

Another student, Brandon McInerney, 14, has been charged with King's murder, and faces the special allegation of committing a hate crime. The Morristown march is the only rally organized in New Jersey in response to King's death.



"How do we make sense of one eighth-grader killing another eighth-grader because he's different?" Wilson asked his congregation prior to the march. "We must find ways to tell the world, 'Enough is enough.'"

Marchers carried stakes bearing the names of children who have been slain because of their sexual orientation, and planted them in the ground outside the church following the march. Christian Fuscarino, a 17-year-old student and the president of the Gay-Straight Alliance at Columbia High School in Maplewood, spoke to the crowd, particularly emphasizing the need to educate students about their rights.

"There are students in these schools that don't know these laws, because there is no one there to tell them," he said.



In order to prevent future hate crimes, Fuscarino encouraged the crowd to make changes themselves to help change the perception of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

"It's 2008. I think that's a year for change," he said as the crowd applauded.

Allison Carr, a 20-year-old student from Fairleigh Dickinson University and the president of the Gay and Straight Peers there, was one of the marchers on Sunday.

"More than discrimination, I see ignorance (on campus)," she said.

According to Carr, students often use slurs that they may not think hurt anyone. However, when you hear of tragedies like King's, she said, it seems that those slurs are the foundation of the violence.



However, Carr said the march was a healing experience for her

'A lot of hope'.

"It was definitely uplifting," she said. "It's also given me a lot of hope."

The newly formed Gay-Straight Alliance at Morristown High School also was one of the groups represented at the march. Andrea Parr, 17, is a straight ally and a member of the alliance's executive committee.

Parr said she hopes the march helps to educate people and bring awareness to the community. Because she is a member of the alliance, she said many other students assume she is gay. Though she is not offended by it, she said she is surprised by their assumption.

Hannah Tillinger, 18, also of the alliance's executive committee, said she too thinks the alliance often is thought of as a club reserved for gay students.

"It's interesting how people can label you based on your club activity," she said.

Tillinger, who is bisexual, said she appreciates the support she receives from the straight allies in the group. She said she also likes that there is no pressure to define yourself.

"You're just a member," she said.

The Rev. Melissa Hall, the assistant rector at the Church of the Redeemer, helped organize the march. Hall said she woke up on Sunday morning feeling exhausted.

"What's happened?" she asked. "Somehow we've lost our heart in this country. This is every parent's nightmare."

However, Hall said she was heartened to see the community's youth taking a stand against violence at the march.

"I am so hopeful," she said after the rally. "These children are so self-actualized."