



**Matthew Shepard Foundation**  
embracing diversity

# NEWSLETTER

## FALL 2013

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[www.MatthewShepard.org](http://www.MatthewShepard.org)  
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### Honoring Matt's Legacy, 15 Years Later

This fall, we commemorate the 15th anniversary of Matthew Shepard's murder. While this is a time for sober reflection and remembrance, it is also a time to celebrate the achievements that have been made for the LGBT community in Matthew's memory. It is our distinct pleasure to share with you some of the upcoming events that honor this incredible legacy.

On the evening of Friday, October 4, the Washington National Cathedral will host the East Coast premiere of the documentary film *Matt Shepard is a Friend of Mine*, featuring a panel discussion with Shepard's parents. For more information, or to purchase tickets, [please click here](#).

On Sunday, October 6, Judy Shepard and Jane Clementi (mother of Tyler Clementi) will discuss their sons' legacies—and how to prevent more deaths among LGBT youth—with Washington National Cathedral Dean Gary Hall.

On Friday, October 11, the Matthew Shepard Foundation will present the Denver premiere of *Matt Shepard is a Friend of Mine*, as the kick-off to the Bear to Make a Difference Gala. [Tickets can be purchased online](#).

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2013 5:00 pm



Seawell Grand Ballroom  
at the  
Denver Center for Performing Arts

On the evening of Saturday, October 12, we host the Bear to Make a Difference Gala and Celebrity Teddy Bear Auction. Actor George Takei will be presented with the Making a Difference Award for his years of activism laced with great humor and wit. We will also be honoring Mike Nelson of ABC7 News with the Essential Piece award, and [MatthewsPlace.com](http://MatthewsPlace.com) blogger, Jake Stallman, with the Spirit of Matthew Award. [Tickets can be purchased online](#). ■

## Matthew Shepard Foundation Calendar of Events

For more information or ticketing, go to [www.MatthewShepard.org/event](http://www.MatthewShepard.org/event)

Sept <b>28</b> 2013	<b>4th Annual "Erase Hate" Benefit.</b> Rehoboth, DE.
Sept <b>30</b> 2013	<b>"With Malice Toward None: Judy Shepard, A Mother's Response to Hate."</b> Ford's Theatre. Washington, DC.
Oct <b>6</b> 2013	<b>Forum with Judy Shepard, Jane Clementi, Joshua Deese, and Dean Hall.</b> Washington National Cathedral. Washington, DC.
Oct <b>11</b> 2013	<b>"Matt Shepard Is a Friend of Mine."</b> Special documentary screening Denver, CO.

Oct <b>11</b> 2013	<b>Candlelight vigil for Matthew with Dennis Shepard.</b> Ford's Theatre. Washington DC.
Oct <b>12</b> 2013	<b>12th Annual "Bear to Make a Difference" Gala.</b> Denver, CO.
Oct <b>21</b> 2013	<b>"The Legacy of Matthew Shepard" with Judy Shepard.</b> College of Charleston, SC.
Oct <b>22</b> 2013	<b>"The Meaning of Matthew" with Judy Shepard.</b> University of Indiana. Bloomington, IN.



Cast members from the Ford's Theatre (left) and Ottumwa productions of The Laramie Project. Whether produced by a national company or a community theater, the play has lessons for everyone.

### **The Laramie Project: Messages for Any Stage**

Whether staged at a prestigious national theatre or a small venue in a Midwestern town, *The Laramie Project* holds essential truths and emotional messages for all audiences. The play has been given life on stages from high schools, universities, and churches, to community, regional and nationally-known theatres. It is one of the most performed dramas in the United States. Among myriad productions in process right now are those by Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., and Theatre Adventures in Ottumwa, Iowa. Although the venues are vastly different, the themes and messages are united.

Ford's Theatre is producing *The Laramie Project* as part of their multi-year Lincoln Legacy Project, and the show is surrounded by artistic and educational programming including a series of panel discussions, special honors at the National Cathedral, and the exhibit "Not Alone: The Power of Response," featuring letters written to the Shepard family at the time of Matthew's attack and death. This layered, beautifully crafted series of events explores the many facets of the play and Matthew's story, and fosters discussion on related topics.

The myriad messages found within *The Laramie Project* are no less potent when revealed in a small Iowa city. This important play was approved and scheduled to be the fall production at Ottumwa High School next month until

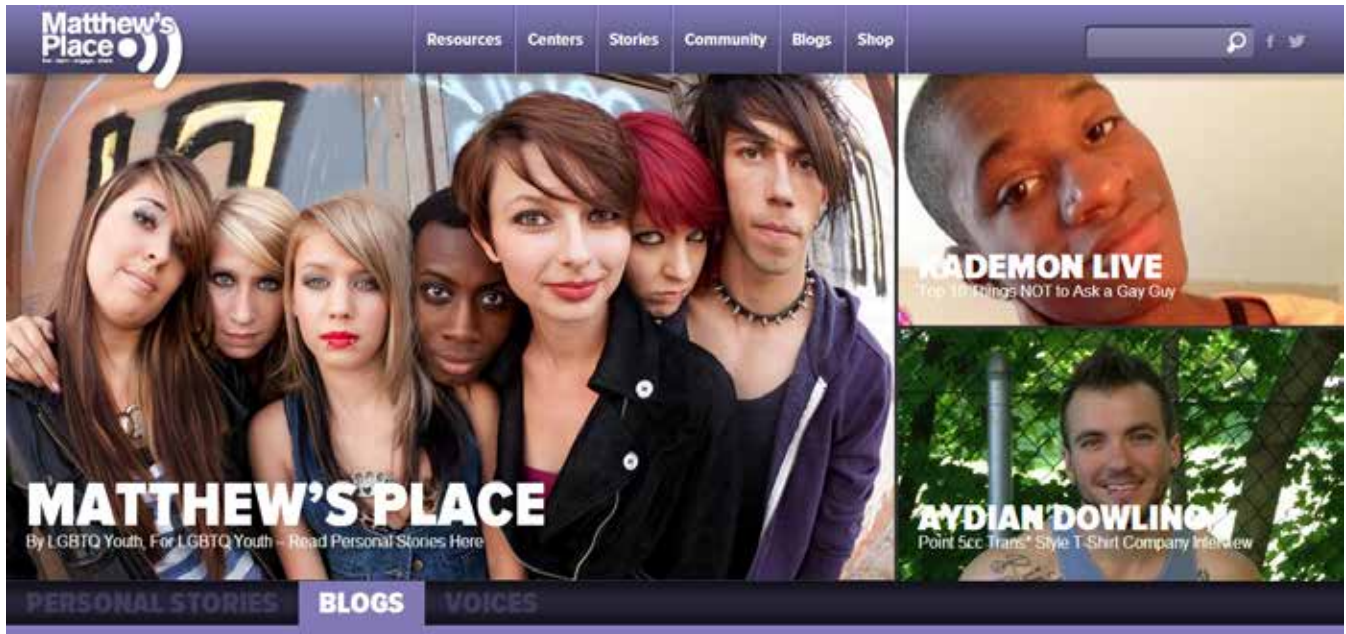
school officials suddenly stepped in and canceled those plans, saying, among other things, that the subject matter was not "family friendly." Despite the arguments made by numerous students and community members that the issues in the play were similar to those which teens face every day in school and in life, the decision stood. In the wake of that controversy, drama teacher Natalie Saunders and friend and director Dale Dommer decided to form their own company, Theatre Adventures, which will instead produce the play independently in a local civic

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center. It is currently in production with a large and diverse cast including 20 students from the high school. Despite the cancellation and continued pushback, this cast seeks to show that *The Laramie Project* is not "that gay play", but rather a sophisticated account about being targeted, hurt, bullied and even murdered for being seen as different, whatever that difference may be. They show how those actions affect the lives of everyone, and create discussions on how to create a more civil, compassionate, and just world. ■



MatthewsPlace.com continues to evolve, with new interviews, bloggers, and resources.

### Always something new at Matthew's Place!

If you haven't checked in on our youth and young adult resources website, [MatthewsPlace.com](http://MatthewsPlace.com), you've missed a lot of great content.

Staying emotionally and physically healthy during gender transition is a tough thing to do as a young adult. Jaime Kruse, one of our Matthew's Place Youth Bloggers, made a [five-part series](#) on health to help MP users understand the transition process.

Jaime's [first video blog](#) took on mental health and finding a good therapist, both of which are incredibly important when you first start hormone therapy. [Coming out to your doctor](#), an important topic for LGBT people of all ages, and [the impact of hormone therapy](#) were discussed in his next two videos.

The final two videos are more personal. The decision to have reconstructive surgery is unique to each person. Jamie talks about [his decisions to have "top surgery"](#) and other surgery options open to the trans community. In his final video, [Jaime talks about common questions](#) he and other FTM men are often asked about their health and how to handle those

questions.

Since we relaunched the site six months ago, we have seen a whole new community flourish. [The personal stories](#) we receive and get to share are inspiring. Take Sean's story. Sean lives in a central Washington state town that doesn't have a Pride celebration, so [he decided to have his own personal pride](#) that was received well by many in his town of 18,000. Or [the story of C.B.](#), an employee of a conservative Christian non-profit who served as a cast mother of sorts during her daughter's involvement with a production of *The Laramie Project*. That play and Matthew's story changed her life in a way that made it possible for her daughter to come out as bisexual.

Matthew's Place is bustling with activity, and we are reaching more people than ever before. This summer, we saw more than double the number of visitors over last, with more returning users than we have ever had before.

So don't be a stranger to [MatthewsPlace.com](http://MatthewsPlace.com); there is always something new to read! ■

### MSF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Special thanks to







Judy and Dennis Shepard.

### A Letter from Judy

Just the other week, I visited Henderson College in Arkadelphia, AR where the incoming freshman class read *The Laramie Project* as their “freshman read.” Ten years ago, this would have been unthinkable – as we discovered at the University of Maryland. But during my visit, the message from students, parents and faculty alike was one of compassion and understanding.

Our country has made incredible progress when it comes to making LGBT equality a reality. The list of victories continues to grow with the recent Supreme Court decisions; the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act; the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell; and, marriage equality in 13 states and growing. In many ways, Matt wouldn’t recognize this country anymore – we’ve come that far. But this journey is far from over.

Every day, the Matthew Shepard Foundation receives phone calls and emails pleading for help, for guidance and support from people all over the country. This year alone has seen terrible anti-gay hate crimes in New York City, Cleveland, and Denver to name but a few. We’ve heard from teachers who have been told they can’t put on *The Laramie Project* as their school play; students who are told they can’t bring their same-sex date to prom; and people – young and old alike – who face discrimination at work and in their communities.

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The truth is that the work my family does, and that done by the staff at the Matthew Shepard Foundation, isn’t about Matt anymore, but about what happened to him and what we do in his memory. It’s about the men and women in this country who are still bullied in the halls of their schools, the couples still afraid to hold hands in public for fear of violence, the families still discriminated against by their governments and all those who are the victims of hate and ignorance. Thank you for your loyal support.

With love,

Judy