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Matthew's Story and the Foundation's Formation

On October 7, 1998, Matthew Shepard, a gay 21-year-old student at the University of Wyoming, was brutally attacked and tied to a fence in a field outside of Laramie, Wyoming, and left to die. On October 12, Matt succumbed to his wounds in a hospital in Fort Collins, Colorado.

In the aftermath of Matt's death, his parents Judy and Dennis Shepard started the Matthew Shepard Foundation to honor his life and aspirations. Because of the tragedy the Shepards endured, the Foundation's beginning principle was to teach parents with children who may be LGBTQ+ or questioning to love and accept them for who they are, not throw them away.

Through their personal appearances across the country and around the world, Judy and Dennis Shepard share Matt's story to highlight the importance of standing up for the LGBT community.

Since our formation, the Foundation has centered its efforts on providing a voice and support for LGBTQ+ people and all who are marginalized.

It is our sincerest hope that, one day, the Foundation may be able to close its doors. But the same hate and violence that sparked our formation still exists today, both at home and abroad. We will continue to work tirelessly to ensure safety, visibility and inclusiveness for the entire LGBTQ+ community until that ideal becomes reality.

Contact Us:

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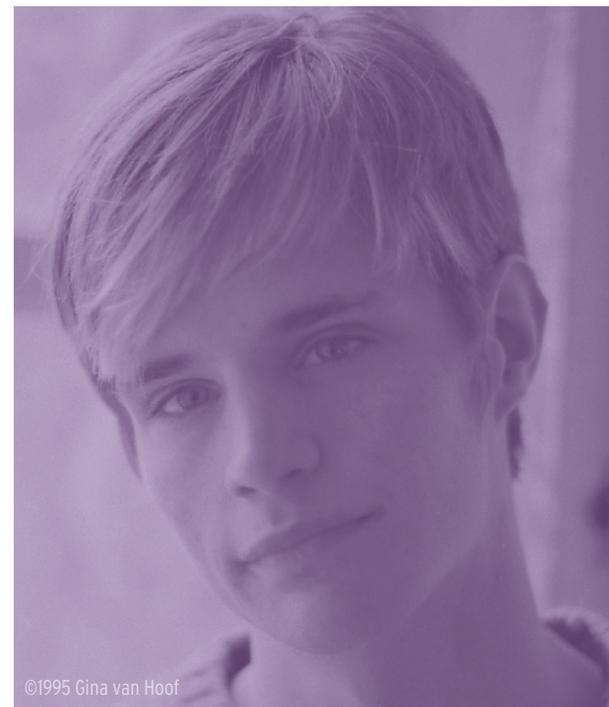
MatthewShepard.org
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For program inquiries:
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For media inquiries:
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Visit MatthewShepard.org/Donate
to support the Foundation's mission
to Erase Hate.



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The Matthew Shepard Foundation empowers individuals to embrace human dignity and diversity through outreach, advocacy and resource programs.

We strive to replace hate with understanding, compassion and acceptance.



Our Work

Our work is an extension of Matt's passion to foster a more caring and just world. We share his story and embody his vigor for civil rights to change the hearts and minds of others to accept everyone as they are.

Speaking Engagements



Since the death of their son Matthew in 1998, Judy and Dennis Shepard have been determined to prevent others from experiencing similar tragedies. By sharing Matt's story and their experience as a family of a hate crime victim, the Shepard family is able to carry on Matt's legacy and help change the minds and hearts of others to create a more understanding, accepting, and compassionate community.

Hate Crimes Reporting



Our work to improve hate crime reporting includes:

- Conducting trainings on state and federal hate crimes laws for law enforcement agencies
- Creating and partnering with local, citizen-led coalitions that directly address issues of hate crimes reporting and awareness
- Building relationships between community leaders and law enforcement officials
- Developing and encouraging policy reform in hate crimes reporting practices

Laramie Project



The Matthew Shepard Foundation offers support to the productions of The Laramie Project. After Matthew's murder in 1998, members of the NYC-based Tectonic Theatre Company traveled to Laramie, WY, to interview residents about how the brutal hate had affected the town. These transcripts were transformed into The Laramie Project, which remains one of the most performed plays in America.



MatthewsPlace.com



MatthewsPlace.com is a website designed to provide young people with resources they need to thrive in this world, make a difference, and gain tools to lead healthy, productive, hate-free lives. The site features a list of shelters, outreach centers, and empowerment programs that are welcoming to youth regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.



Our Challenges

In a post-marriage equality society, it's vital we don't lose focus on the issues that continue to threaten the rights and lives of the LGBTQ+ community.

- Lapses in hate-crime law enforcement
- Employment and housing discrimination
- Disproportionate violence against trans people
- Bullying, suicide and self harm
- Lack of access to healthcare and social programs

How You Can Help

Volunteer, support our programmatic work, invite us to speak at your place of employment, or help at one of our many events. Contact Volunteers@MatthewShepard.org.

The Foundation hosts fundraising activities throughout the country. Either in-person or online, we encourage your participation with:

- Coordinating functions in your community
- Private fundraisers, i.e. weddings, walks, etc.
- Online Peer-to-Peer fundraising
- MSF's annual October gala in Denver

To further support our events and fundraising efforts, contact our Development Director at Events@MatthewShepard.org.

