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Thadd .......................................................................... Tod Macofsky
Tootsie ........................................................................ Mario Mosley
Mikey ............................................................................ Sacha Sacket
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Creative Producer......................Jimmy Nguyen

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Tour Coordinator ....................Amy Wangsadipura

Music clearances by David Wagner
Vocal percussion by M-PACT

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Sarah Wolter, Rafael Agustin, Top Shelf Vocal Ensemble
The members of the Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles
Seth Levy and the It Gets Better Project Team
Video contributors to the It Gets Better Project

Performers appear with the cooperation of Theatre Authority West, Inc.

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Eric Himan

"Over The Rainbow"
E. Y. Harburg, Harold Arlen
EMI Feist Catalog Inc.

"Smile"
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Bourne Music Company

"Lunchbox"
Arthur Brown, Vincent Crane, Michael Finesilver, Robert Kerr, Brian Warner, Scott Putesky, Brad Stewart
Dinger and Doggie Music

"Tubthumping"
Judith Abbott, Duncan Bruce
Paul Greco, Darren Hamer, Anne Holden, Nigel Hunter, Louise Watts, Allan Whalley
EMI Blackwood Music Inc

"Song for Jamey"
Sacha Sacket

"At Seventeen"
Janis Ian
EMI Blackwood Music Inc

"All the Pretty Boys"
Sacha Sacket

"If I Could Turn Back Time"
Diane Warren
Real songs

"Crazy"
Thomas Callaway, Gian Piero Reverberi, Gian Franco Reverberi, Brian Burton
Chrysalis Music
Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp

"It Is Well With My Soul"
Horatio Spafford, Philip Bliss

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"Smalltown Boy"
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"More Friends Than You Know"
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"I Was Here"
Diane Warren
Real songs

"You Learn"
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 Aren’t we always supposed to accept others for who they are?

The turning tide toward something better

By Lani Engstrom

Justin Aningberg was a 15-year-old boy who had just finished his freshman year of high school in Anoka, Minnesota. On July 6, 2010 his mother and two brothers found him dead in his bedroom. Justin had committed suicide after being bullied at school simply because he was gay. And Justin wasn’t the only one.

In September of that same year, Billy Lucas hung himself in his grandmother’s barn after being called a “fag” at his high school.

It was then that sex-advice columnist Dan Savage realized he wouldn’t be able to reach out to Justin, Billy, or others who had passed, but he could speak to numerous other gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered teenagers and tell them it gets better. On September 21, 2010 Dan and his partner Terry Miller created a YouTube channel to inspire, teach, and reassure these young kids and ultimately prevent them from ending their lives.

Within one week, another 200 LGBT supporters had posted the same kinds of videos encouraging the students to fight through the hard times. Today, the It Gets Better Project has over 50,000 user-posted videos that have been viewed over 50 million times. The project has been endorsed by so many different celebrities like President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, Anne Hathaway, Adam Lambert, Matthew Morrison, Sarah Silverman, Lady Gaga, the San Francisco Giants, and so many more.

I have always wondered why gay rights are such a huge issue in today’s society. Haven’t we, as Americans, been pushed to be unique and different our whole lives? Aren’t we always supposed to accept others for who they are? This country has already overcome so many prejudices, so why is it so difficult for many to accept gay, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals?

My support for gay rights began at a young age. When I was 11 years old, I was a part of the children’s chorus in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. My whole dance class was in the production, and I was one of several of the girls who had a secret crush on the man who played Benjamin. He was always so nice to us kids, while some of the older people in the cast didn’t even pay attention to us.

One evening my mom’s friend was driving us to our show and we girls were all talking about “Benjamin” and how much we liked him. All of the sudden our driver stopped the car, turned around, and told us, “You don’t want to play with THOSE people, they aren’t good people. They sin and love men instead of women. Don’t play with them.” I remember being so confused and crying because he wasn’t any different from anybody else to me. He was kind and funny and why couldn’t my friend’s mom see that? Of course, I never really understood what she meant by it until I got older, but I will never forget what she said.

It is painful to know that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students are two to three times more likely to commit suicide than their peers. They are also five times more likely to miss school because they fear their safety.

So what is being done in schools to protect LGBT students and stop the hatred? There have been violent anti-gay acts dating back to 1998. It wasn’t until 2009 the government began to do something about it. In September of that year, President Barack Obama formally enacted the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crime Prevention Act. The act’s purpose is to protect individuals against violence based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. It is named after two young men who were brutally beaten to death merely because of their choice in partners.

The next big stand for LGBT bullying came with a little show called Glee. The show follows Kurt Hummel, a gay student at McKinley High School where he is yelled at, thrown into dumpsters, pushed into lockers and actually crowned the school’s homecoming queen as a practical joke.

Ultimately Kurt decides to transfer schools when the administration fails to act on his behalf. Later we discover the football jock doing all the bullying is gay himself. Kurt and his boyfriend Blaine return to McKinley to stand up for what they believe in. Kurt’s character and the show has inspired so many young people to not feel afraid at school anymore and to be confident.

Next, in March of 2011, President and First Lady Obama held a conference to discuss bullying prevention. The goal of the conference was to find options and ways to address bullying from a government standpoint and a non-government view. Around 150 students, parents, and teachers were in attendance for the discussion. Several months later the state of New Jersey enacted the “Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights.” This law was created to focus on suicide prevention, improving teacher training, and an incident reporting system. Many other states chose to follow New Jersey’s lead because it was one of the strictest anti-bullying laws passed at that time.

The United States officially has no federal law directly addressing bullying, but some cases can pertain to harassment laws. According to stopbullying.gov, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice have enforced laws that schools are required to attend to any bullying, teasing, or harassment that is based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disability. It is interesting and unfortunate there is no mention of sexual-orientation. When will it become time for our government to address this epidemic nationally?

Still, many are trying to raise awareness and fix the problem. In November of 2011, Lady Gaga established an anti-bullying organization called, The Born This Way Foundation. Its goal is to promote self-confidence and prevent harassment in all schools. We have recently seen a made for television movie based on cyber-bullying and E! TV specials where celebrities discuss bullying. I hope as awareness increases, bullying statistics and suicides continue to decrease.

With each new improvement, young kids are on the road to becoming more accepted and welcome in their high schools and middle schools and It Gets Better has been there every step of the way. The provision is helpful for the bullying people who see the hatred and prejudice every single day and want to change it. On October 26, 2010 the Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles uploaded their version of an “It Gets Better” video, singing “True Colors.” —the beginning of the collaboration between It Gets Better Project and the Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles to create It Gets Better.

If you would like to get involved with the It Gets Better Project please go to www.itgetsbetterproject.org to learn more +

Lani Engstrom is a UI student and Honicher intern.
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Lanl Engstrom is a UI student and Honcher intern.
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<td>m.c. Ginsberg</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the work I do with my music therapy clients, I have really become PASSIONATE ABOUT SONGWRITING over the past several years. Songwriting has truly been my own form of therapy while trying to make sense of events in my own life, as well as the experiences of others around me.

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