



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE



Directing Change and Hope & Justice Films, Art, and Written Works with a Focus on the LGBTQ+ Community

(Updated June 2024)

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Films



Real People

CTEC, Kern County

“Real People” encourages queer teenagers by reminding them that their identity is nothing to be ashamed of. Thus, the film seeks to combat internalized homophobia while empowering young members of the LGBTQ+ community.

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Directing Change Documentary: A Look in the Mental Health of the LGBTQ+ Community

Pleasant Grove High School, Sacramento County

This documentary-style film includes interviews from numerous students in order to provide an authentic glimpse into the mental health challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community.

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real members of the
LGBTQ+ community,
not just a statistic.



That Didn't Come Out Right

Fremont Academy of Engineering and Design, Los Angeles County

This film tells the story of a youth who is outed to their parents by a school principal.

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My Safe Space

Sage Creek High School, San Diego County
This film highlights the difficulties of being a neurodivergent and/or queer high school student and how concealing part of yourself is ultimately detrimental to your mental health and self-worth. Fortunately, many communities provide safe spaces (including clubs, classes, and after school activities) where students are able to take off the mask and be the person they truly are.

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How does expressing or not expressing your gender affect your mental health?

A Genderqueer Perspective

Sage Creek High School, San Diego County
Youth describe the way gender expression impacts their mental health, reminding viewers of the importance of allowing people to express their authentic selves without judgment.

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Dear Lee

Sanger West High School, Fresno County
This film “looks at the challenges of Mental Health from an LGBTQ+ perspective. [The character] Lee faces struggles and is advised by a friend to attend a GSA meeting where he can make new friends and find comfort.”

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Silenced

Riverside Ramona High School, Riverside County
“Our film is specifically about being part of the LGBTQ+ community and the struggles within it. We want people to know that although not everyone will accept you, there are other people who will – you are not a problem.”

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We All Fall

Pleasant Valley High School, Butte County
“This video includes real testimonials from people within the LGBTQ+ community and some of the struggles that they have encountered, their individual mental health struggles, and issues they have had when accessing mental health care services.”

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Love Wins

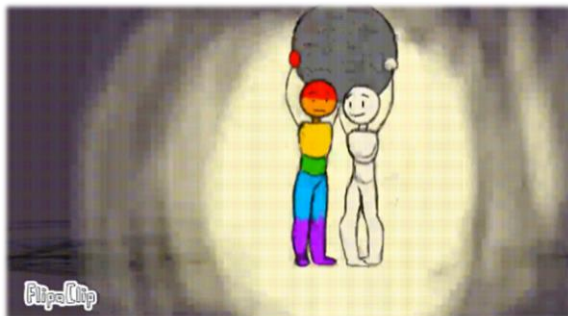
Clovis East High School, Fresno County
LGBTQ+ students communicate the importance of reaching out, seeking help, and knowing that you are not alone.

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Transposed

Ramona High School, Riverside County
“Transposed is about the struggles of fitting into a society where you aren't accepted for being transgender. These struggles have a great impact on a person’s mental health.”

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Hope Through Friends

Options for Youth Acton – Hesperia GSA, San Bernardino County

“The animation our group created shows what helps us get through the tough times, specifically when the world is weighing on us. The one thing we all had in common was a person that could help lift the weight off our shoulders.”

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Within Our Communities

Windsor High School GSA, Sonoma County
“Within Our Communities” is a documentary film in which youth discuss being part of the LGBTQ+ and Hispanic/Latinx communities.

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Proud to Be Me

Canyon High School, Orange County
This is an inspiring film from the perspective of an LGBTQ+ high school student who shares his story of overcoming depression and being proud of who he is.

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Discovering May

Portola High School, Orange County
In “Discovering May,” a transgender woman shares her story of discovering her identity.

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Celebrate

HCTAYC, Humboldt County
This film is about the power of reaching out to support LGBTQ+ youth.

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Sundays

Canyon High School, Orange County
“Sundays” tells an LGBTQ+ story of acceptance and how friends support a young person during a difficult time.

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Boxed Up

Canyon High School, Orange County
“Boxed Up” encourages LGBTQ+ youth to connect with the Trevor Project to help others feel safe and supported.

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Binary Blues

Humboldt County Transition Age Youth Collaboration, Humboldt County
This film is about the beauty of diversity transgender and gender non-conforming youth and how they can look to their community for support.

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After Storm Message

Clovis East High School, Fresno County
In “After Storm Message,” a youth shares their story and a message of hope for LGBTQ youth.

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Art

Blossoming Identity

Angelo Rodriguez High School,
Solano County

“As a young closeted queer person, I often felt alone. However, once I finally got to high school, I saw all of these wonderful openly LGBTQ+ people who were happy to reach out their hand to me. They supported me as I came into my own identity and helped me gain the confidence to be out myself. Seeing them out and proud gave me such hope for the future.”

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Breakout

Claremont High School, Tri-City (Los Angeles County)

“The chrysalis represents the proverbial and literal closets that so many LGBTQ people are forced to hide in. Butterflies represent hope, so this project represents my hope that LGBTQ people will be able to come out of the closet and be accepted in the future.”

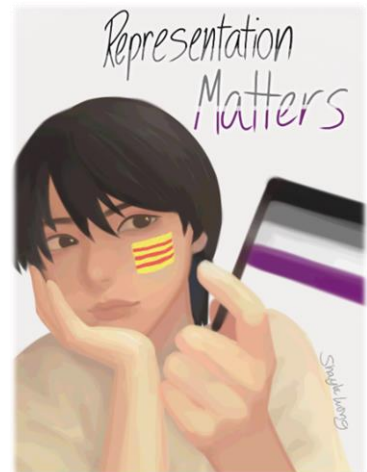
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Representation Matters

Valley View High School, Riverside County

“My entry depicts an Asian-American person holding the Asexual (Ace) flag in their hand. They have the South Vietnam (Republic of Vietnam) flag on their cheek [...] I am not only a Vietnamese American. I am not only Asexual. I am all of those things. The idea of representation is a big deal to me, and I want my drawing to empower and inspire other people who relate to my background.”

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Who I Am

Benicia High School, Solano County

“I have drawn a representation of me and who others perceive me to be in black and white. [...] The color represents me and who I am – with the fluidness of the color showing my gender and sexuality being fluid.”

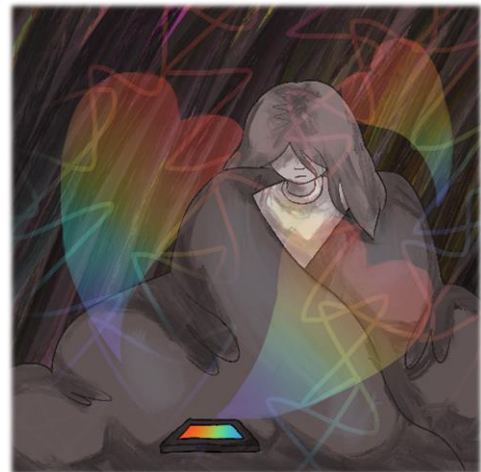
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Internet Connection

Rodriguez High School, Solano County

I wanted to show how online communities can support each other when they don't receive support from the people around them due to how they identify. [...] I see and hear so many negative comments about people in the LGBTQ community and it makes me upset because those people leaving the comments genuinely hate a group of people because they want to be themselves. Being in an online community where everyone is supportive definitely helps me when I lose hope.”

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New Year, New Me

Claremont High School, Tri-City (Los Angeles County)

“For the new year, I wanted to be a newer, better version of myself. As someone who feels like they don't fit the binary, I've struggled with my gender identity a lot. [...] The cutting of the hair represents them taking a step towards the change they want—the step I want to take to reaffirm my identity.”

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Cracks of Boundary

Claremont High School, Tri-City (Los Angeles County)

“I hope that those who do not struggle with such issues feel a call to action – to emotionally support those struggling and help reform gender and gender norms within our society.”

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Community

Claremont High School, Tri-City (Los Angeles County)

“There is an old Chinese belief called the ‘Red Thread of Fate,’ which [refers to] an invisible red string wrapped around the fingers of a pair of soulmates. It connects two soulmates regardless of place, time, or circumstance [...] The queer/LGBT community faces countless obstacles that prevent us from freely loving our partners and ourselves, yet we always find our community and each other through the challenges.”

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Love in All Colors

Rodriguez High School, Solano County

“I wanted to focus on LGBT acceptance, especially for people in families of color. I found that it's more unlikely for people of color to accept the LGBTQ [community] and family members who might happen to be in it. In a perfect world, children would be accepted by their parents no matter their orientation or identity. Supportive families are the first step to acceptance [...] It's shown that when a family accepts their child for who they are, their suicide rate drops to less than half.”

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Help is Achievable

Yuba County

“I chose this category because I am a part of the LGBTQ+ community. I have had friends and classmates who have had hardships and I know that help is difficult to achieve, but once you have it, the outcome is rewarding.”

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Paper Cut-Out

Santa Clarita Valley International, Los Angeles County

“For the past 4 years, I’ve been wanting to cut my hair. Only this past year was I finally able to cut it, and seeing myself with short hair brought me a feeling that I can’t even begin to describe. A year after I initially wanted to cut my hair, I realized that I was queer [...] Once I cut my hair, it felt like I could breathe.”

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Together

Claremont High School, Tri-City (Los Angeles County)

“I really wanted to emphasize the importance of togetherness and acceptance.”

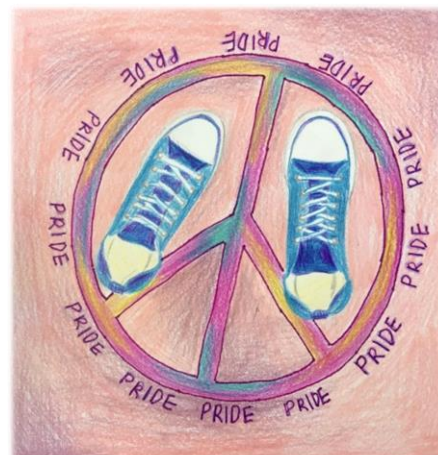
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Rainbow Path

Claremont High School, Tri-City (Los Angeles County)

“My drawing is intended to bring hope for LGBTQ people.”

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Disphoris

Hawking STEAM Charter School, San Diego County

The artist shared, “Having gender dysphoria takes a toll in my life sometimes, and I like to express my feelings through painting or drawing.”

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Written Works

Fortunate Queer

Dorothy Kirby/ LACOE, Los Angeles County

"This art piece is basically talking about dreams and reality. I want fortune. As a genderqueer individual, I demand it."

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A Mirror Worth Your Life

Novato High School, Marin County

“My piece is about some of the struggles that me and countless other trans people experience on a daily basis. [...] The poem is my way of bringing up some of the emotions that come up when I hear people misgender or disrespect me (or anyone else who doesn't identify as cisgender).”

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I've spent hours standing in front of this mirror wishing the reflection would change
Yet it never does
When does staring become dissociating
Because I've been gazing with glazed eyes at these shapes and colors for so long they don't
even feel like mine anymore

Your words leave me wondering why the pitch of my voice determines how many letters you use
to define me
Three or five
Man or Woman
I tell myself next time I'll finally correct you
Finally work up the courage to tell you that you can't even begin to comprehend
How my identity fits in the most colorful gray area you've ever seen

But no matter what
I'm always brought back to that same timid figure looking back at me
I try to tell him that no matter what you say I'll never be him
He just looks back at me and laughs
Because he knows no matter how strong I seem
Bit by bit
Your consonants and vowels still break me

You've taken a hammer and chisel to my brittle bones
Watching while the hairline fractures move up and down my entire body
Every single syllable that spills out
Causes the clink of metal on metal I've grown so used to
Now I'm a blaze of orange and red
Every nerve ending firing at the same moment

You say that for every time I've been knocked down
I'll always stand up one more
But how can that be true when I've collapsed so many times
That I'm not even sure who I am anymore
How will I ever be sure the next time my knees buckle
It won't be the last

I'm standing in front of my mirror again
Something's changed
There didn't used to be red streaming down my arms
My eyes couldn't be likened to a shroud of darkness
And my skin wasn't void of pigmentation

LGBTQ+ Community: You Are Not Alone

Twin Lakes School, Los Angeles County

“I was hoping to tell other LGBTQ+ people that they are never alone; they have a community that will always support you no matter what.”

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LGBTQ+ Community *You Are Not Alone*

Hi my name is Frida, and I will be telling a personal story about not being alone as a young LGBTQ+ person. I'll begin by telling you that I am bisexual. When I initially revealed this to a few select friends, some abandoned me. It was a normal day as my family and I were returning from a camping trip. I was helping them unpack. Then I got a text from a friend. Right then and there, to my surprise, my dad took my phone. He went through my text messages and saw that I was telling my friend that I am bisexual. Then he told my mom. My parents told me that it wasn't right, that I didn't know anything, and they were disappointed in me. I felt so alone. My parents didn't know how much I had gone through mentally as I struggled to locate my self identity. They could not find the right words to love and support me. After a few days, my mom took me to a church and she told me, "You will pray for yourself to stop having these thoughts." I was devastated that my own mom had said this. I played it out, pretending I was acceptably "normal" again. So, I ended up getting my phone back. Afterwards, my cousin told me that he was also part of the LGBTQ+ community. He taught me to be honest, to act like myself. At that moment I no longer felt alone anymore. I was wondering if there were more people like me and my supportive cousin? I started to look up stories and found out that people get kicked out of their own family homes. In the end it got better. My mother is trying to understand. I think she might know that I am still bisexual; however, my dad still hates it, yet he still thinks I am normal. Overall, to those who are like me you might think you're alone. Let me tell you that you are not alone, trust me.

Need to talk to someone? Call 1-866-488-7386