



Message To Heterosexuals: Take a Stand Because Your Silence is Killing Us

By Dr. Maura Cullen

An all out assault is taking aim at gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people across this country. And with mid-term elections on the horizon you can be certain that the Republican Party will dispense the anti-gay/pro-family platform frequently.

GLBT students have experienced the bulk of the violence. Bullying, both new school (cyber-bullying) and old school techniques have proven to be deadly. Even politicians and musicians are taking their heterosexist and dangerous rhetoric to the public airwaves.

Here are some of the troubling events that have taken place this past month alone.

- 'Don't ask--Don't tell' policy permitting discrimination of LGBT military service personnel is upheld. GLADD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) reported that over the last month, four teenagers have taken their own lives after facing bullying incidents and another student that was not reported brings the total to five.
- 18-year-old Tyler Clementi, a freshman at the Rutgers University New Brunswick/Piscataway Campus, jumped off of the George Washington Bridge after a classmate secretly filmed him kissing another man and then posted it to the Internet.
- 13-year-old Asher Brown, a student at Hamilton Middle School in Cypress, Texas, shot himself in the head after enduring what his mother and stepfather say was constant anti-gay harassment.
- 13-year-old Seth Walsh, a student at Jacobsen Middle School in Tehachapi, Calif., hanged himself from a tree after classmates taunted him repeatedly for being gay. He initially survived the attempt, but he died after ten days on life support.
- 15-year-old Billy Lucas, a freshman at Greensburg High School in Greensburg, Ind., hanged himself the day his friends say he was suspended from school for fighting back against the bullies who abused him constantly. The harassment was often directed at what the aggressors presumed about his sexual orientation.
- Raymond Storm Chase, a gay man from Johnson & Wales University (RI) hung himself in his residence hall room.
- Michigan Assistant Attorney General Andrew Shirvell has waged a media war against Chris Armstrong, president of the University of Michigan student assembly who is gay. Through cyber-bullying and harassment as well as TV appearances, Shirvell is committing the very same acts of harassment he has vowed to protect people from. On his blog Shirvell called Armstrong "Nazi like," a recruiter for "the cult that is homosexuality," and a proponent of a "racist, anti-Christian agenda."
- 50 Cent tweeted an anti-gay message to his 3.3 million followers soon after Tyler Clementi's suicide. The rapper wrote: "If you a man and you are over 25 and you don't eat pu**y just kill yourself damn it. The world will be a better place. Lol."

All of this hate in only one month's time. Without question this is only the tip of the iceberg. October 11th is Inter-national Coming Out Day. In the United States, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) manages the event under the National Coming Out Project, offering resources to LGBT individuals, couples, parents and children, as well as straight friends and relatives, to promote awareness of LGBT families living honest and open lives. It is time for our heterosexual allies, family and friends to become vocal in speaking out and standing with their GLBT family, friends and colleagues. It is no longer acceptable to simply know what the right thing is to do; we must find the courage to actually DO IT!

Message To Heterosexuals: Take a Stand Because Your Silence is Killing Us

As heartbreaking as these stories are and for the many that have not been told, there is hope. There has been a loud outcry for change from politicians and educators. Hollywood and television personalities, Ellen, Anderson Cooper, Dr. Phil, the cast of Glee and Modern Family, etc... have taken a strong stand against anti-gay bullying.

Among other highlights reported by HRC:

- Corporate America protects LGBT workers from discrimination and provides benefits in ways that the government doesn't. While only 29% of the U.S. population lives in states with statewide non-discrimination statutes that specify sexual orientation and gender identity, 99% of Corporate Equality Index-rated companies include sexual orientation and 76% include sexual orientation and gender identity in their non-discrimination policies. In 2002, only 5% of companies included gender identity among their non-discrimination policies.
- In 2004, only 3% of Corporate Equality Index-rated companies addressed transgender health with limited benefit offerings. Today, 79% of rated companies provide this limited coverage and 85 companies specifically offer at least one health care plan option to all employees that covers many medically necessary transition-related treatment including hormone therapies and sexual affirmation surgeries.
- In 2002, 70% of Corporate Equality Index-rated companies provided domestic partnership health-care benefits. Today, 95% of rated companies provide that coverage
See full article from DailyFinance: http://www.dailyfinance.com/story/company-news/target-best-buy-and-3m-lose-gay-rights-groups-top-rating/19660038/?icid=sphere_copyright

As educators we must be vigilant in creating a climate where our GLBT students feel safe. Acts of harassment and bullying must be taken seriously and dealt with in a timely manner. We have to confront language, even the very common saying of "that's so gay" or "fag". It's often the accumulation of what many think are harmless remarks and jokes that leave a lasting impact on the GLBT community or those perceived to be GLBT. Our allies have to be empowered with a skill set that allows them to confront their heterosexual peers and parents. **We must not back down from those who would seek to harm us---we must stand up--stand out--and stand together.**

Diversity Quick Flicks are six 'must see' short video's addressing today's most common diversity challenges and offers quick solutions. To receive Dr. Cullen's **FREE** video series visit www.DiversityQuickFlicks.com or TEXT your name and email to 1 508 928 3848.

Articles are provided for educational purposes and may be reprinted unaltered without prior permission, provided credit is given to the author as the source and the following paragraph is included. Notice of their use and publication, however, would be appreciated and can be sent to info@TheDiversitySpeaker.com.