

**Matthew
Shepard
Foundation**
embracing diversity

2011 YEAR IN REVIEW



Judy & Dennis Shepard with honoree Jennifer Beals at the 2011 MSF Bear To Make A Difference Gala Dinner



Matthew Shepard
Photo by Gina Von Hoof

A Note from the Executive Director

It's been 13 long years since the terrible events that took place on the prairie east of Laramie, Wyoming. Little by little, in the way all great things come about, Matthew's loved ones, and thousands of donors and well-wishers, joined together to try to shine some light into the dark corners of our society where hatred grows.

Out of that somber but hopeful effort came the pieces of an enduring campaign. Looking back, 2011 was a turning point for the Matthew Shepard Foundation in drawing those pieces more firmly together, reaching a broader audience and making a lasting difference.

Foremost always, Judy Shepard continues in her extraordinary personal mission to educate and inspire all of us, young and old, that we must embrace, not abuse, those who differ from ourselves. She reached 40 communities in person this year, her 11th on the road, drawing thousands to her message of hope and activism from high schools, colleges, companies and the public.

This year the Foundation multiplied its messengers. Dozens of "Laramie Project" productions received personal Foundation guidance on how to engage

audience dialogues, provide richer historical and artistic context, and ensure more educational opportunities for performers. And acclaimed children's author Lesléa Newman now joins this growing group, using art and creativity to reveal to schoolchildren the personal costs of discrimination and violence.

Young people this year found even more new resources, and messages of affirmation, compiled at MatthewsPlace.com, and lent their own voices to the effort in a youth blogger corps. Video blogging, and interactive educational exercises, continue to be developed to make this unique site a user-driven community.

The tens of thousands of you, our donors, supporters and corporate and institutional partners, are the real heroes of this story. In the hearts of all of us who knew Matthew Shepard, and seek to improve the world in his memory and in his honor, you give us a rare gift: the chance to devote our efforts to a powerful cause.

Your generosity has helped salvage hope and progress out of senseless violence and despair. Please accept our thanks for your role in an extraordinary year, and continue in your own daily lives to "Replace Hate with Understanding, Compassion and Acceptance."


Jason Marsden
Executive Director

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You Can
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www.VoteMatthewShepard.org



Vote for the Matthew Shepard Foundation in the American Giving Awards presented by Chase, to give the Foundation the chance to win up to \$1 million! Voting begins Dec. 1, 2011 and continues through Dec. 8. Go to www.VoteMatthewShepard.org for more info.

Outreach

What we do...

Our programs give communities the chance to interact. Whether it's Judy Shepard spreading her message of acceptance, Dennis Shepard advocating victims' rights, or our Laramie Project Specialist, Susan Burk, hosting talk-back sessions for school and community productions of "The Laramie Project," our programs open dialogue and encourage constructive communication. The best way to reach people is face-to-face; the Foundation is committed to that kind of in-person outreach.

What's in store...

In the coming year, the Foundation will continue to expand our programs in our ongoing effort to "Erase Hate." Our growing speakers bureau is now better able to cater to the needs of the communities that we assist. The variety of backgrounds and professional credentials our speakers offer bring schools and community groups invaluable insight from the perspective of journalists, authors, activists, and public safety officials. And our Laramie Project Specialist will continue to reach more and more school and community productions, as well as offering more insights about the play through our strengthened partnership with the Tectonic Theater Group.

How you can help...

If you know a community that needs to hear our message of acceptance, let us know. If there are topics that our speakers should address, we'd like to hear them. We pride ourselves on our commitment to in-person community outreach, and we value your feedback.



The cast of The Laramie Project production in Escondido, CA holds one last dress rehearsal before opening night. "The plays The Laramie Project and The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later have become essential sources of education and change in communities in this country and across the world," said Susan Burk, MSF's Laramie Project Specialist. "I'm proud to offer help for those who wish assistance in mounting a production." Ms. Burk traveled to Escondido in September, met with the cast, and led a talk-back discussion to a packed and thoughtful crowd on opening night of the play.

Advocacy

What we do...

The Foundation and the Shepard family continue to call the public's attention to ongoing efforts to advance true equality for all Americans regardless of difference, as well as attempts to roll back those measures. We work with law enforcement to make sure hate crimes laws are properly enforced and that officers and prosecutors are well-trained. We contact lawmakers to insist on fairness in the realms of marriage, immigration, military service and employment. And we inspire citizens to actively participate in their communities --- even our international supporters.

What's in store...

In the coming year, we will watch for changes in the laws and monitor the public debate surrounding marriage equality, safe-schools legislation and prosecutions of hate crimes. We will continue our active partnership with the Human Rights Campaign, the Leadership Council on Civil Rights, the Safe Schools Rapid Response Network, and other colleagues doing great work all over the nation. And we will continue to call on all supporters to register to vote, communicate with their public officials, and demand accountability. The LGBT movement cannot succeed on its own, and we will continue to motivate and activate its sympathetic partners so crucial to the success of all efforts to attain equality

How you can help...

If your employer discriminates against LGBT workers, speak up. If your city, state, or federal lawmakers are standing in the way, or leading the way, call us. Together, your voice and ours are the most powerful tools we have to create change.



In January, 2011, MSF Executive Director Jason Marsden (left) met visiting scholars from Cyprus, Turkey, Burma, and Armenia, in Denver with the Institute of International Education, a group dedicated to fostering mutual understanding, developing global leaders, and protecting academic freedom worldwide. "Advocacy is more than writing your elected officials – it's reaching out to your peers at home and around the world," said Marsden. During the group's visit to Denver, they networked with LGBT activists and studied MSF's approach to combating prejudice.

Resources

What we do...

Our resources give young people and communities the tools they need to live healthy, productive, hate-free lives. MatthewsPlace.com, our youth resource website, continues to post our popular series of interviews with LGBTQA actors, singers, and professionals, as well as giving these youth a safe place to learn and communicate online. And our Laramie Project Support program provides materials and tools for those who wish assistance in mounting a production, even when we can't be there in person.

What's in store...

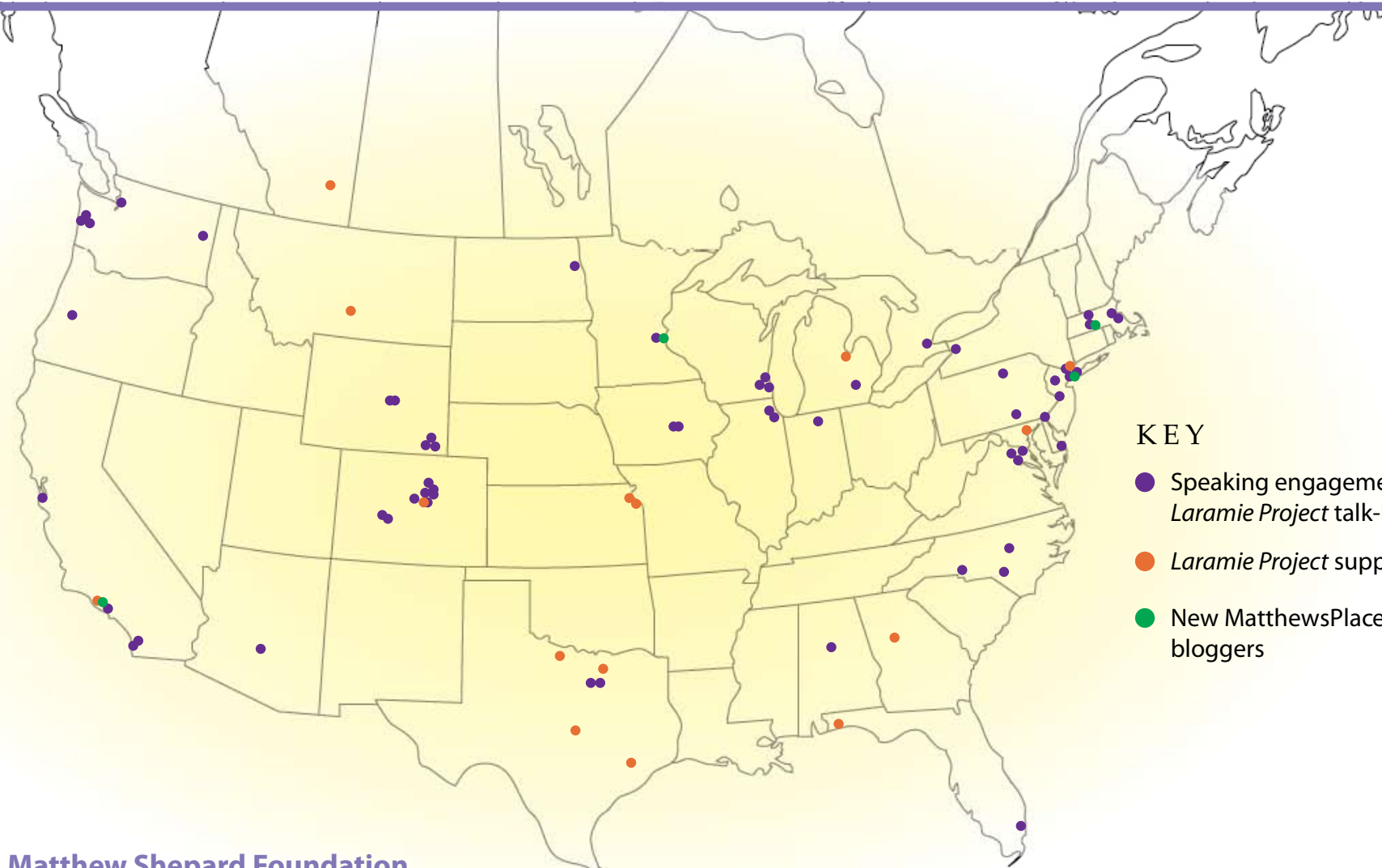
In the coming year, MatthewsPlace.com, our LGBTQA resource website, will continue to grow as new bloggers contribute their thoughts and experiences. New blogs such as Kat Wells' "Safe Spaces," following her journey to create a hate-free space in her community, and Jamie Sky's "Sky's the Limit," documenting his gender transition and the experience he and his family, friends and community go through, will give young people the chance to express themselves and interact with their peers. And we will continue to develop innovative online tools to help prevent bullying and discrimination.

How you can help...

If you are mounting a production of *The Laramie Project* and need help, contact us. If there are topics that should be covered on MatthewsPlace.com, or interviews you'd like to see, chime in. The resources we provide are there to help you!



A selection of MSF's series of educational posters. MSF continues to distribute resources such as these to educators nationwide who seek to provide safe school environments. "By continuing to tell Matthew's story we are reaching students across the nation," said Robert House, MSF Programs and Outreach Manager. "MatthewsPlace.com, our LGBTQA resource website, continues to add young bloggers from across the nation." The resources at MatthewsPlace.com offer its users unique perspectives and observations from their peers facing similar challenges and situations.



KEY

- Speaking engagements and *Laramie Project* talk-back sessions
- *Laramie Project* support
- New MatthewsPlace.com youth bloggers

**Matthew Shepard Foundation
PROGRAMS TRACKER
2011**

In 2011, we spoke in 60 U.S. and Canadian communities. Our *Laramie Project* Support program—began this summer—also helped 17 more productions we couldn't personally visit. And MatthewsPlace.com recruited four new youth bloggers. Your support makes it possible!

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Want to be a part of this important work? Your new or renewed gift, or monthly pledge, ensures the Matthew Shepard Foundation can continue and expand its programs. There are many ways to give, including estate bequests, corporate partnerships, and events. For more information, contact:
greg.greenhalge@matthewshepard.org.

Leadership Council

The Leadership Council is an extraordinary group of donors who help fund the work of the Foundation through annual gifts of \$1,000 or more. These funds directly support our wide-ranging programs, including community outreach, advocating for equality, and providing resources for LGBT youth.

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