



DEBRA CHASNOFF

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GroundSpark Responds to Teen Suicides by Offering Free Award-Winning Films and Curricula to Address Anti-Gay Bullying

Documentaries used by thousands of schools now available for free home use

San Francisco, CA, October 13, 2010...[GroundSpark](#), the national nonprofit behind Academy Award-winner Debra Chasnoff's highly acclaimed anti-bullying documentaries, is catalyzing school communities to address stigma connected to sexual orientation and gender roles by providing conversation-starting films and curriculum guides for free until the end of November. The materials have opened up dialogue and culture change in thousands of schools and youth programs, and this is the first time that they can be viewed for free.

This offer comes as a response to the recent string of suicides committed by young people who had been targeted with endless anti-gay harassment. It is intended to reach those who have a role to play in bullying prevention but are rarely included in the national dialogue: parents, all school staff beyond just teachers, the youth who do the bullying, and those that see it and stand by and say nothing.

GroundSpark's tools help open up the discussion beyond the recent focus on youth who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. "Anti-gay bias affects *everyone* in a school community, and real change requires that *everyone* is engaged—from the youth who are targeted to the students who do the bullying, the silent witnesses, and every teacher, staff member, and parent," says Chasnoff, GroundSpark's president and senior producer. "Getting entire communities to talk about the pressures that led to these suicides will not be easy, but we've seen scores of classrooms and staff meetings light up in meaningful discussion and take action after seeing our films. We want others to experience that spark of change as well."

GroundSpark is making the following films available for free online [streaming](#):

[Let's Get Real](#) - middle school students share their diverse experiences with name-calling, bullying, and bias;

[Straightlaced—How Gender's Got Us All Tied Up](#) - teens speak out how rigid gender stereotypes and ideas about sexual orientation limit everyone no matter how they identify;

[It's Elementary—Talking About Gay Issues in School](#) - teachers show how easy it is to have age-appropriate discussions about bias in K-8 classrooms; and

[It's STILL Elementary](#) - students and teachers show the long-term benefits of addressing bullying and bias, and echo a new call to action for safe schools.

In addition to providing films, GroundSpark is making its professionally developed curriculum guides available online for free as well. These lessons and facilitation instructions can help foster change in a variety of settings — from classrooms to church groups.

Information on how to access the free curriculum guides and streaming films is available at <http://groundspark.org/get-involved/groundspark-responds-to-tragic-news-of-teen-suicides>.

About Groundspark:

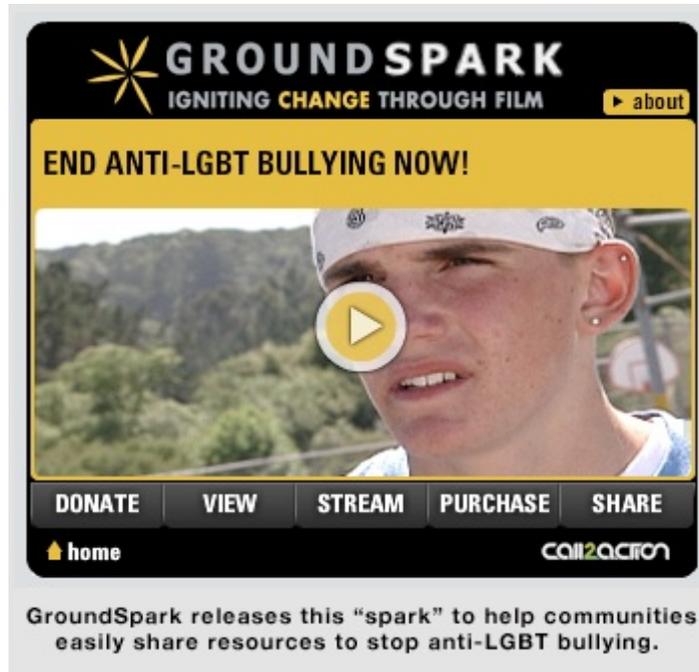
GroundSpark creates visionary films and dynamic education campaigns that move individuals and communities to take action for a more just world. GroundSpark's Respect For All Project facilitates the development of inclusive, bias-free schools and communities by providing media resources, support

and training to youth, educators and service providers.

About Debra Chasnoff:

Debra Chasnoff is an Academy Award-winning documentary filmmaker whose work has fueled progressive social-change movements in many fields. She is the president and senior producer at GroundSpark and co-creator of [The Respect For All Project](#). She is an experienced spokesperson and has appeared on programs from CNN's Situation Room to NPR's Bryant Park Project.

Debra Chasnoff and the educational staff of The Respect For All Project are available for interviews about youth bullying culture and how to build safer, more respectful environments.



The graphic features the GroundSpark logo at the top left, with the tagline "IGNITING CHANGE THROUGH FILM" and an "about" button. Below this is a yellow banner with the text "END ANTI-LGBT BULLYING NOW!". The central image shows a young man wearing a white headband, with a play button icon overlaid on his face. At the bottom of the graphic are buttons for "DONATE", "VIEW", "STREAM", "PURCHASE", and "SHARE", along with a "home" button and the "call2action" logo. A text box at the bottom states: "GroundSpark releases this 'spark' to help communities easily share resources to stop anti-LGBT bullying."

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