

GROUNDSPARK

HUNDREDS OF EDUCATORS AND ACTIVISTS UNITE TO LAUNCH NEW CAMPAIGN ON YOUTH AND GENDER

New GroundSpark film to Open Classroom Dialogue About Gender Stereotypes

In the wake of the murder of Lawrence King, GroundSpark is igniting a national dialogue about youth and gender with a new feature-length documentary ***Straightlaced - How Gender's Got Us All Tied Up***. ***Straightlaced*** takes a powerful and intimate look at how popular pressures around gender and sexuality are shaping the lives of American teens. The film proudly showcases the diverse and unscripted voices of more than 50 youth from a wide range of high schools across the country, who speak with breathtaking honesty, insight, and humor about gender roles and the struggle to be who they really are. GroundSpark recently premiered its new feature-length documentary ***Straightlaced*** at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, California to a more than sold out 750 seat theatre and received a rousing standing ovation.

GroundSpark is embarking on a national educational campaign with the film, with curriculum for high school classrooms, professional development workshop for educators, community screenings, and media outreach. In the last two weeks, we hosted screenings in Greensboro, North Carolina and Atlanta, Georgia. These screenings have generated a flood of interest, and we are expecting a big response to the launch, both from the media and from educators, other youth allies and teenagers nationwide. At least twenty more community screenings are in the pipeline including a special screening in Laramie, Wyoming at the Shepard Symposium on Social Justice, in honor of the 10th Anniversary of the passing of Matthew Shepard.

We are also organizing benefit premieres in cities including Boston, New York, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis. GroundSpark is taking ***Straightlaced*** on the road with aspirations to reach all 50 states. The impact of the film has been touted nationwide; Don Schwartz from CineSource Magazine emphatically states, "I cannot overstate how important this documentary is to helping our children and young adults escape violence and find their own ways in life. If I was King of the World I'd have every parent, teacher and 12-year-old in America see this documentary so that as many hearts and minds as possible would find more compassion and understanding, and take more initiative in protecting our young people, our future."



Student participants in ***Straighlaced***, at the Premiere
– the audience was moved by their courage to speak the truth



Debra Chasnoff, our Executive Director and Micah Price, student
"Through the many and diverse voices in the film comes a unified message: as young people, we need more dialogue about the pressures we are facing to not be our true selves." Says Micah Price, who graduated from Ponderosa High School