



MEDIA ADVISORY:

Short Film Against Gun Violence Wins Troy Perry Award in OUR PRIDE 2019 LGBTQ+ Student Video Competition

[SAN DIEGO, CA, June 10, 2019] A moving short film that interweaves images of mass shootings with Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah” and Martin Niemöller poem “First They Came” has earned 16-year-old filmmaker Odessa Shlain Goldberg the top honor in this year’s OUR PRIDE Video Fest competition.

The juried competition asks student filmmakers in schools and colleges to create and share digital stories about significant LGBTQ+ people, places and events that have shaped our world and are impacting the future.

“The film illustrates how passivity in the face of injustice is complicity during World War II, but instead reframes and rewrites the 1946 poem to focus on the prolific, devastating shootings in schools and public institutions,” said Odessa, a Tamalpais High School student in Mill Valley, California. “One of the horrific shootings commemorated is the Pulse Nightclub shooting in 2016 targeting the LGBTQ+ community. The final call to action of the video reminds the viewer to take action against gun violence by voting.”

Odessa was awarded the Troy Perry Award for her film, which features Rufus Wainwright’s rendition of the classic Cohen song and chronicles some of the worst mass shootings in recent history. The award, which recognizes young people who are making an impact through social activism, was created in honor of Rev. Dr. Troy Perry, a Los Angeles-based renown international human rights activist and pioneer in social equality, legal protection and spiritual justice for LGBTQ people.

Perry led a historic opposition to the defeated 1978 California Briggs Initiative, which was written by lawmakers to ensure gay and lesbian teachers would be fired or prohibited from working in California public schools, and was a leader in the fight for marriage equality. In 1970, he conceived the first Gay Pride Parade and co-founded the Christopher Street West organization to launch the first LA PRIDE event following the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion. He is perhaps best known as the founder of Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC), the first church to recognize the spiritual needs of the gay community, which sparked a worldwide movement.

“I’m deeply moved by this video which conveys such an important message for our time,” said Perry, who was especially touched by the inclusion of “First They Came,” written in 1946 by German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller. “The original poem was written by Niemöller following the Nazis’ rise to power and the cowardice of German intellectuals and certain clergy, including Niemöller himself,” Perry said. “Odessa’s video adapts the original message in a way which can move people to take action at this critical time in our country.”

OUR PRIDE Video Fest includes a collaborative blended-learning education program, with participants connecting locally, across time zones and around the world with one another to experience the different cultural environments and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ people in other cities and countries. OUR PRIDE supports California’s recently mandated inclusive education initiative SB 48 FAIR (Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful), which requires courses to be non-discriminatory and to integrate

factual information about social movements, current events, and history of LGBTQ+ people into instruction.

“The struggles and achievements of the LGBTQ+ community are components of the civil rights movement, yet many of these stories remain untold. This competition gives young people the opportunity to tell historically meaningful stories, as they collaborate with others locally or around the world and to produce their own original music, poetry, and creative content,” said OUR PRIDE Video Fest Co-Director Dr. Yvonne Marie Andrés, who also serves as CEO and co-founder of the San Diego-based educational nonprofit Global SchoolNet. “We want all students to become aware of LGBTQ+ history and to use their imaginations to present their findings in compelling ways.”

OUR PRIDE winners receive international recognition, an invitation to screen their film at San Diego Comic-Con, and a one-year WeVideo license, the online video platform for individuals, schools and businesses for creating videos at up to 4K resolution.

Sponsors and partners include Children’s International Film Festival, WeVideo.com, GayRealEstate.com, UCLA TV & Film Archives and Outfest UCLA Legacy Project.

OUR PRIDE Video Fest is a program of 501(c)3 Global SchoolNet Foundation, together with Los Angeles-based 501(c)3 Rainbow Advocacy and the LGBTQ+ Sector of Seattle-based 501(c)3 Charter for Compassion.

FOR INTERVIEWS OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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Global SchoolNet (GSN) engages educators and youth in worldwide digital learning projects, to develop science, math, literacy and communication skills, foster teamwork, civic responsibility and collaboration, encourage workforce preparedness, and create multi-cultural understanding. GlobalSchoolNet.org

Rainbow Advocacy is a Los Angeles-based LGBTQ+ social action & advocacy 501(c)3 nonprofit providing content development and networking with collaborating organizations and LGBTQ+ advocates around the world, and producing awards for the winning entries. rainbowadvocacy.org

Charter for Compassion is a Seattle-based 501(c)3 nonprofit participating as global collaborator. Created through the winning 2008 TED Prize presentation by scholar and author Karen Armstrong, the Charter for Compassion today is a global, uniting document calling for the Golden Rule at its ethical core, with the 501(c)3 nonprofit leading a global compassion movement. charterforcompassion.org

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