

DISCUSSION GUIDE

REAL

A SON'S TRANSITION.

A MOM'S TRANSFORMATION.

BOY





FROM THE FILMMAKER

“Real Boy is a story about one young trans man and his family, told through my lens. It isn’t every trans person’s story, but I think everyone can relate to the feeling of wanting love and wanting to give love. That story is deeply universal.” - Shaleece Haas

I initially met Bennett through Joe. I was filming Joe at a small concert in Sacramento and Bennett was opening the show. I was really struck by Bennett’s music and lyrics. He was talented and charming. At that time, he was at the beginning of his journey – both around his gender transition and becoming a young adult.

I was also struck by the bond he and Joe had developed, even though they had met only a few weeks prior. From my own experience as a queer woman, I have always been interested in the LGBTQ community’s long history with “chosen families,” and I was interested in making a film about Bennett and Joe’s relationship. Then I met Suzy, Bennett’s mom, and the scope of the film broadened.

I saw instantly that there was a lot of love between Bennett and Suzy. And even though they were struggling to hear each other at first, I knew they were going to be okay. That’s when the film became about the intersections of given family and chosen family — and about both Bennett and Suzy’s stories.

Suzy starts out in a place of resistance, and by the end of the film she comes to embrace and celebrate her son. People in the audience may start out in a similar place when they begin watching. If they can go on that journey with Suzy, maybe their own thinking about trans people will shift just a bit to allow for more nuance.

Ultimately, I want the world to be a safer, more inclusive place. And that means making it safer and more inclusive for trans people. When we embrace gender diversity in our schools, our workplaces, our homes, and our public spaces, it benefits everyone. There’s more room for all of us to be completely and authentically ourselves.

I’m so grateful to Bennett, Joe, and Suzy for allowing me to tell their story, and to all of you for sharing it in your community. Thank you.

All the Best,

Shaleece Haas



ABOUT THE FILM

Real Boy is an intimate story of a family in transition. As 19-year-old Bennett Wallace navigates early sobriety, late adolescence, and the evolution of his gender identity, his mother Suzy makes her own transformation from dismay to acceptance of her trans son. Along the way, both mother and son find support in their own communities, reminding us that families are not only given, but chosen.

KEY TOPICS

Gender identity, gender expression, trans/transgender teens and young adults, mental health, family acceptance, mentorship and peer support, self-harm and coping, music, healing arts, substance abuse and recovery, parenting, relationships.

To go deeper into these topics, please visit the *Real Boy* [website](#).

WHY THIS MATTERS

Every day, young trans people face rejection from their families and communities. In some cases, the consequences can be devastating: trans youth who struggle with rejection and discrimination are at an [increased risk for serious depression, substance abuse, high-risk sexual activity, homelessness, and suicide](#).

Yet, as Bennett's story shows, family and social support can make a world of difference. Research from the Family Acceptance Project shows that family acceptance of LGBTQ youth and young adults protects against depression, substance abuse, and suicide, and is linked to better health and self-esteem.

Real Boy takes an honest look at one young person's experience of gender transition and the evolution of his relationships with family and friends. The film also explores the very complex feelings his mother experiences on her own journey to acceptance.

A *Real Boy* screening and post-screening discussion can help to:

- Raise awareness about the experiences of transgender youth and open a community conversation about gender identity.
- Build family and community support for LGBTQ youth—especially transgender youth—and discuss ways to create a more inclusive community.
- Provide a safe space for LGBTQ community members, their families, and other allies to connect with one another.
- Connect audiences with local resources that support LGBTQ people and their families, including mental health and addiction services.

Discussing these issues honestly, reflecting on our own relationship with gender, and taking steps so that all members of our communities feel respected and supported can make a real difference—and in some cases, even save lives.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed for facilitators of *Real Boy* screening and engagement events. It includes background information, tips for facilitating discussion, questions for discussion and reflection, additional activities that can be adapted for a variety of settings and participants, and resources for learning more about gender identity and finding support.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

On the [Real Boy](#) website, you can find:

- A more in-depth exploration of key themes
- A longer list of resources for trans people and their allies
- Additional ways to get involved
- Updates on where the people in the film are now, including links to Bennett and Joe's blogs and music websites

FACILITATING DISCUSSION

Real Boy addresses topics that may be emotional for some people. As a facilitator, you can help create a safer space for reflection and discussion by taking time to prepare before your event.

BEFORE YOUR EVENT

Before the screening, watch the film on your own. Take time to note your own reactions: *What in the film resonates with you? What doesn't? What about your own life experiences do you think influenced your reactions to the film?*

Read through this guide in advance and make note on the questions you may want to ask and the activities you may want to lead with your group.

If you plan to have guests participate in a panel or post-screening Q&A, talk with them about expectations for the event and make a basic outline of how much time you will allocate for each activity.





AT YOUR EVENT

At your screening event, you can help set the tone for a productive conversation by modeling an open and nonjudgmental attitude. Be aware that the people in the room may have varying experiences with issues in the film—including people who may be out as transgender or gender nonconforming; who may be transgender or gender nonconforming but not be out; who may have trans or gender nonconforming loved ones; or who may be struggling with addiction, self-harm, or family rejection. If you are new to this topic and unsure of how to talk about it, please see the “**Discussing Trans Issues: The Basics**” section of this guide and/or the additional resources included here and on our website before your screening.

Before you start the discussion, set shared expectations with participants. Remind everyone that the film explores some topics that may be upsetting or emotional for some people and to practice appropriate self-care during the screening and discussion. Shared expectations may vary from group to group, but are likely to include some basics:

- Respecting other people’s privacy and confidentiality
- Appreciating the different perspectives and life experiences in the room
- Refraining from interrupting —only one person speaks at a time

Encourage proper pronoun usage by inviting people who speak at your event, whether they are trans or not, to state their name and preferred pronoun when they introduce themselves. This activity can help to normalize pronoun identification and provides a model for audience members to use in other public spaces.

As a facilitator, your role is to help create a meaningful conversation—not to be an expert or a therapist. Ensure everyone in the room is heard, but don’t force anyone to participate. And remember: you are a fellow learner. Don’t be afraid to say, “I don’t know” and direct people to trans support organizations in your community or to the additional resources on our website.

LIFE SAVING RESOURCES

- [The Trevor Project’s 24/7 Lifeline: 866-4-U-TREVOR \(866-488-7386\)](#) or [Trevor Chat](#), the Trevor Project’s online messaging service.
- [Trans Lifeline: 877-565-8860](#)
- [The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK \(8255\)](#)
- Outside of the United States? See [The Trevor Project’s list of international resources here](#).

DISCUSSING TRANS ISSUES: THE BASICS

If you are new to this topic, here are some terms and concepts it will be helpful to know (adapted from the [GLAAD Media Reference Guide](#)).

Transgender or Trans: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to bring their bodies into alignment with their gender identity. Some undergo surgery as well. But not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures.

Gender identity: A person's internal, deeply held sense of their gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two choices (see non-binary and/or genderqueer below.) Unlike gender expression (see below) gender identity is not visible to others.

Gender expression: External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, and/or body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture. Typically, transgender people seek to align their gender expression with their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cisgender: A term used by some to describe people who are not transgender. "Cis-" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side as," and is an antonym of "trans-." A more widely understood way to describe people who are not transgender is simply to say non-transgender people.

Non-binary and/or genderqueer: Terms used by some people whose gender identity and/or expression falls outside the categories of man and woman. They may define their gender as falling somewhere in between man and woman, or they may define it as wholly different from these terms. The term is not a synonym for transgender or transsexual and should only be used if someone self-identifies as non-binary and/or genderqueer.

Learn more at the [GLAAD website](#).

GENDER AND PRIVILEGE

Cisgender people (those whose assigned sex and gender identity align) experience a certain level of privilege in their everyday lives. Unlike trans people like Bennett, Joe, and Dylan, cisgender people rarely have to think about their gender when they fill out forms, shop for clothes, use their passports, or use a public restroom.

However, as white, middle class trans men, Bennett, Joe, and Dylan still have a significant amount of privilege compared to many other trans people. Their race and socioeconomic status allows them to more easily access medical care, gender confirmation surgeries, employment, and information. Other trans people who do not have this level of privilege can experience much more hardship, including homelessness and violence. Transgender people of color (and trans women of color in particular) are more likely to experience violence at the hands of police, strangers and—all too often—intimate partners and family members. (Please see "Resources for Learning More" to find organizations that specifically serve transgender communities of color.)



A Note on Language: It's important to use respectful terminology, but also recognize that language is constantly evolving and varies according to region, community, culture, etc. If you slip up or someone tells you they found your language offensive, try not to get upset. Everyone makes mistakes—take it as a learning moment, apologize, and move forward. We are all at a different place in our journey with regard to these topics, and we are all learning all the time.

The most important thing is to come from a place of respect. Use preferred names and pronouns—if you don't know what pronouns to use, ask politely. Respect confidentiality—don't out people, and don't ask questions about anatomy, details of transition, or previous names. If there are out trans people at your screening, don't expect them to speak for the entire community. Check out [GLAAD's Tips for Allies](#) and our resources for more information on being a trans ally.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

After screening the film, allow some time for participants to share their thoughts and reflections, using the questions below to guide the discussion. Feel free to pick and choose the questions that resonate most with you and your group.

1. Could you relate to any of the themes in the film? If so, which scenes resonated with you most deeply? How did you feel while watching them play out on screen?
2. Where do you think your ideas about gender come from? Can you remember when you first started hearing that some things are for boys and others are for girls? Where do you continue to see these distinctions in your everyday life? How do these ideas vary depending on culture, place, and time period?
3. At the beginning of the film, Bennett describes himself as being “a boy with the wrong body parts.” Today, Bennett describes his experience differently: “I don’t see any part of my experience as ‘wrong’. I was born to transition and share my experience,” he says. What do you think about this evolution in the way Bennett’s sees his own experience? Is there part of your identity that has evolved over time?
4. “Being born in the wrong body” is a very common narrative about transgender people, and is often one of the only stories told about being transgender. Some transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive people describe their experience this way, while others feel it doesn’t reflect their experience. How might the prevalence of the “born in the wrong body” narrative impact the way we think about transgender experiences?
5. Bennett asks his mom, “Where do you draw the line?” when it comes to body alteration. How do body modifications like ear piercing, plastic surgery, or even make-up and hair dye relate to society’s ideals of gender? How is Bennett’s gender confirmation surgery similar to or different from his mom’s plastic surgery, which he refers to in the film?
6. Bennett faces significant challenges related to his gender identity. He also benefits from privileges that other trans people may not have, particularly racial and economic privilege. How might Bennett’s experience differ from the experience of someone who does not enjoy these privileges?
7. Suzy was raised to be private about personal matters. Meanwhile, Bennett finds healing sharing his experiences publicly on YouTube. Which approach do you relate to most? What are the advantages and disadvantages of both?
8. When talking with Suzy during their sons’ top surgeries, Dylan’s mom Julie says, “We don’t have to necessarily understand completely and fully, we just have to support [our children] and love them.” Do you think that you have to understand someone in order to support them? What are some steps you could take to try to better understand a loved one whose life experience is different from yours?
9. How did you feel when you found out Joe had relapsed? How did you feel about the lack of closure regarding Joe’s addiction? How does it relate to your understanding of the process of recovery?
10. Bennett used drugs, alcohol, and self-injury as coping mechanisms during his adolescence. What effects do you think these types of coping mechanisms have on one’s sense of self or on the process of self-acceptance? What examples of healthier coping mechanisms did you see in the film?
11. Joe says in the film, “I want Bennett to heal and be happy in ways that I have a hard time feeling about myself.” In what ways do you think mentoring relationships benefit both the mentee and the mentor?
12. What are some ways Dylan’s mom Julie serves as social and emotional support for Suzy? In what ways is it similar or different to the way that Dylan and Joe support Bennett?
13. Like many LGBTQ people throughout history, when Bennett doesn’t find the support he needs within his own family, he builds a “chosen family” with Dylan and Joe. Do you have people in your life that you consider chosen family members? If yes, what ways do they provide you support? If not, can you think of examples of chosen families you see around you?
14. How would you characterize your school or community’s level of support for trans people? Would Bennett, Joe, and Dylan feel accepted and welcomed in your community? What changes would help make it more welcoming and inclusive?
15. What might you do to support a young trans person or a family member of a trans person in your life? After viewing the film, what do you see as your role/responsibility in making your community safer and more inclusive for trans people?

PROTAGONIST Q&A: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Q: What have you been up to since the filming of *Real Boy*?

Bennett: So much has changed since filming. After completing a few semesters of sociology classes, I hit the road and embarked on an adventure to explore my country. Along the way, I met a lot of people who inspired me to deepen my commitment to creating art. Currently I am living and working on a small farm in Northern California with my sweetie and our two dogs.

Suzy: I'm doing well. Still living in Pasadena and working in the school district where my kids grew up. I am fortunate to love what I do and the people with whom I work. I have the greatest friends who are supportive of me and Bennett.

Joe: I am working on a musical called "The Transcivility of Albert Cashier," set to premiere in Chicago in October 2017. I'm also touring with my own music and playing bass, banjo and guitar for other songwriters. I plan to apply to a graduate program in Spain to study music production starting in the fall of 2018.

Dylan: I'm so grateful to say that Ben and I are still close friends and that I'm still in contact with all of the wonderful people that were involved in the film. Since *Real Boy*, I was in a serious car accident that led me to a find new sense of purpose in Emergency Medical Services. I am now a certified EMT in Los Angeles.

Q: What was your initial response to participating in the film? Did you have reservations?

Bennett: When I met Shaleece through Joe, I don't think any of us knew what this film would become. Any reservations that I may have had in the beginning were overcome when I saw the ways in which this film could positively impact my community.

Suzy: I initially had some major reservations about being part of the film because I feared for my child's privacy and the consequences of making his story public. Bennett has always been one to go his own way. I realized that if I truly wanted to be there for him, I had to be there every step of the way. That ended up meaning I was going to be in front of a camera.

Joe: Having done my own activism within the trans community for many years as an out trans musician, I was comfortable being open about my experiences. It was almost easier to share intimate parts of my life on film (rather than on stage) because I wasn't thinking



about the audience, I was just going about my day and there happened to be a camera there.

Q: How has participating in the film affected you personally?

Bennett: *Real Boy* has been a catalyst for healing in many ways for me. This film has given me the opportunity to understand the transition that my family had to go through to support me.

Suzy: Participating in *Real Boy* helped me come to a place of acceptance quicker because of all the wonderful people I met through filming and the stories they shared.

Joe: It was great to see all the parents' experiences in the film. During my own transition I wasn't paying attention to what my parents were going through because I was so caught up in my own experience. Watching Suzy's story helped me have a better sense of my own family's journey.

Q: Bennett, has the rest of your family seen the film?

Bennett: My dad has seen it, and I think he's proud of us for sharing this story. My relationship with both of my parents has evolved so much since we started this project, and I'm grateful to say that today they are my biggest supporters.

Q: Joe, the film shows some vulnerable moments, including your experience with addiction. What was it like to have that part of your life filmed?

Joe: When we were filming, I didn't really think much about it. I just felt like I was talking with my friend Shaleece, and she had a camera with her. It felt good to have someone to talk to who wouldn't judge me in the middle of some really awful times. I didn't think I would keep drinking as long as I did. I thought surely the consequences would have shaken me out of it. But they didn't for a long time. My path with addiction hasn't turned out like I expected it to. But I have less judgement now—of myself and of other people's struggles.

Q: What impact do you hope the film will have on the people who watch it?

Bennett: My hope for this film is that it serves as a resource for families in transition. I want the parents of trans youth to have better support systems to deal with

the journey. I want viewers that have felt rejected by someone they love to know that there is a community of kind and loving people waiting to meet them. We can all heal ourselves, together.

Suzy: I hope that people use this as a resource to educate and to show that acceptance is a process. It's hard for me to watch *Real Boy* because I cringe at some of the things I said early in the film – clearly I had a lot to learn! Have compassion for those that are different and accept your children for who they are.

Joe: I hope the film will give hope to trans, LGBTQ, and questioning folks and their communities of all ages, and show that there is life after the hard times. I also hope it will show folks who aren't familiar with trans/LGBTQ issues that we have far more in common than they might think.



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

If you have extra time, here are some additional activities for small groups or individuals you can adapt for your particular setting (or assign as homework as appropriate). These exercises can be adapted to work for people of all genders in any setting.

1. Reflecting on Gender

Adapted from [Gender Spectrum's "My Gender Journey"](#):

Make photocopies of the questions in the next page. Give participants 15-20 minutes to answer the questions on their own. Let them know that these questions are for personal reflection only. They do not have to share their answers, and they can opt out altogether if they choose.

When everyone is done, ask if anyone would like to share with the larger group, being careful not to pressure anyone to share who doesn't want to.

REFLECTING ON GENDER

Adapted from [Gender Spectrum's "My Gender Journey"](#)

What are the similarities and differences among the experiences of the people in the room? Do any themes emerge? If possible, write some of the themes on a board or flip chart.

When you were growing up, did you think of yourself as a boy, girl, neither, both, or in some other way? When and how did you come to that recognition?

What messages did you receive from people around you about gender when you were growing up? Did those messages make sense to you?

How did you express your gender to the rest of the world when you were a child? How do you do so now? (For example, did you have restrictions growing up that you do not have now? Do you have restrictions now that you did not have a child?)

When you were a child, did you ever feel like you weren't "acting like a boy" or "acting like a girl"? What would have made you feel supported? How could you provide that kind of support for the young people in your life?

How were students who did not fit into expectations about gender treated in school by other students? By the adults around them? By you?

Have you ever been confused by someone's gender? How did that feel for you?

Has anyone ever been confused by your gender, possibly referring to you in a way that is not consistent with your own sense of gender? How did that feel for you?

How would you describe your gender without talking about how you look or what you do?

2. Community Gender Scavenger Hunt

If your screening is in a school or community building, break participants up into small groups and have them canvass the building, identifying things that are broken down by gender. (Note: If assigning this activity as homework, you can extend it to include your entire campus or community.) Ask each group to create a tally of what they find:

- How many bathrooms are designated for boys/men? How many for girls/women? How many single stall or all-gender bathrooms?
- What else do you see that is gendered? Locker rooms? Sports trophies? Sections in the library? Signs on the walls? Advertisements?

Return to the larger group and have each group share their results. Discuss together: Did the number of gendered things surprise anyone? What could be changed to make this particular building or environment more inclusive for all genders?

3. Taking Action

If your group is interested in participating in advocacy on behalf of trans people, complete the following activity. Working together in small groups, identify a local, state or federal bill that will support transgender rights and what you can do to support it. Find examples [here](#).

Work together on the spot to write an email or letter or brainstorm more in-depth and/or creative responses to bring attention to these bills, such as organizing a day of action.

4. Reflective Writing Prompts

Give participants time to reflect on the one of these writing prompts or assign as homework, if appropriate.

- Write a letter to a young trans person, either someone you know or someone in the film. What would you want to say to them? What information can you share? How can you offer your support? What will you do to you help to make your school, community, and the world safer and more supportive for trans people?
- Our search for identity affects those around us. Consider Bennett's transition from his mom Suzy's perspective. What aspects of Bennett's transition might have been hard for her? If you were his mom, what might have been hard for you? What might you have done differently? Have you ever felt grief and loss when a loved one didn't conform, behave, or make decisions the way you wanted them to? How did you show support (or not)?



RESOURCES FOR LEARNING MORE

The list below is just a small sampling of the many valuable resources available to support trans health and safety, address transgender rights, and learn about being a trans ally. Visit our [website](#) for a more extensive resource list.

- [Black Trans Advocacy](#): Black Trans Advocacy collectively addresses inequities faced in the black trans human experience. The program provides referral services, case management, and direct services through a national advocacy network and state chapter coalitions.
- [Campaign for Southern Equality](#): The Campaign for Southern Equality advocates across the South for LGBTQ rights in all areas of life. They offer direct services, rapid response grants, and publish [Trans in the South: A Guide to Resources & Services](#).
- [COLAGE's People With Trans Parents program](#): COLAGE's People With Trans Parents program supports, represents, and creates community for people with trans parents. They host an online community and their resources include the [Kids of Trans Guide](#).
- [Family Acceptance Project](#): The Family Acceptance Project studies parents, families, and caregivers of LGBTQ youth; develops training and assessment materials; and has created a new model of family-related care to prevent health and mental health risks, keep families together, and promote well-being for LGBTQ children and adolescents.
- [GSA Network](#): GSA Network is a next-generation LGBTQ racial and gender justice organization that empowers and trains queer, trans, and allied youth leaders to advocate, organize, and mobilize an intersectional movement for safer schools and healthier communities.
- [Gender Diversity](#): Gender Diversity increases the awareness and understanding of the wide range of gender variations in children, adolescents, and adults by providing family support, building community, increasing societal awareness, and improving the well-being for people of all gender identities and expressions. They also host the annual [Gender Odyssey](#) conference.
- [Gender Spectrum](#): Gender Spectrum provides education, training, and support to help create a gender sensitive and inclusive environment for children of all ages. Gender Spectrum offers free downloadable resources including toolkits, lesson plans, and school assessments. They also host an annual conference for trans youth and their families.
- [GLAAD Transgender Media Program](#): GLAAD works with the media to fairly and accurately tell the stories of transgender lives, partners with transgender people and advocacy groups to raise public awareness of transgender issues, and provides free media trainings to empower transgender people to share their stories.
- [GLSEN](#): GLSEN's mission is to create safe and affirming schools for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. GLSEN has been conducting research and evaluation on LGBTQ issues in K-12 education since 1999.
- [Human Rights Campaign](#): HRC educates the public and provides resources on issues facing transgender and gender nonconforming people—including workplace discrimination, securing identity documents, culturally competent healthcare, parenting issues, and combating violence—and advocates for full inclusion and equality.
- [National Center for Lesbian Rights \(Transgender Law\)](#): The National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) is dedicated to advancing the civil and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and their families through litigation, legislation, policy, and public education.
- [National Center for Transgender Equality \(NCTE\)](#): The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) is a social justice organization dedicated to advancing the equality of transgender people through advocacy, collaboration, and empowerment.
- [PFLAG's Our Trans Loved Ones](#) Written by PFLAG staff members, and created with the help of content experts, reviewers, and PFLAGers, Our Trans Loved Ones is full of information, first-person stories, and expert input geared to those who have a loved one who has come out as trans or gender expansive.
- [Sylvia Rivera Law Project \(SRLP\)](#): Sylvia Rivera Law Project works to guarantee that all people are free to self-determine gender identity and expression, regardless of income or race, without facing harassment, discrimination, or violence through legal services and trainings.
- [Trans Latin@ Coalition](#): TransLatin@ Coalition advocates for the needs of the Trans Latin@ community in the U.S.A. and plans strategies that improve the community's quality of life.
- [Trans People of Color Coalition](#): Trans People of Color was created as a response to people of color who felt unheard and underrepresented in the trans equality movement. It organizes trans people of color to fill the void of representation in making key decisions that impact the entire trans community.
- [Trans Youth Equality Federation](#): The Trans Youth Equality Foundation is a national nonprofit foundation that advocates for transgender, gender nonconforming, and intersex youth ages 2–18 and their families. Their programs include annual retreats, trainings for education and medical professionals, youth workshops, and an educational podcast series.
- [Trans Youth Family Allies \(TYFA\)](#): Trans Youth Family Allies empowers children and families by partnering with educators, service providers and communities, to develop supportive environments in which gender may be expressed and respected.
- [Transfaith](#): Transfaith is a multi-tradition, multi-racial, multi-gender organization working to support transgender spiritual/cultural workers and their leadership in community.
- [Transgender Law Center \(TLC\)](#): The Transgender Law Center works to change law, policy, and attitudes so that all people can live safely, authentically, and free from discrimination regardless of their gender identity or expression.
- [Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund \(TLDEF\)](#): Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund is committed to ending discrimination based upon gender identity and expression and to achieving equality for transgender people through public education, test-case litigation, direct legal services, and public policy efforts.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

Shaleece Haas is a documentary filmmaker based in Los Angeles. She co-produced [The Genius of Marian](#) (2013, Tribeca, POV) and produced the short films *Awardwinninggir* (2012, SF DocFest) and *City Fish* (2011, Hot Docs, Documentary Channel). Shaleece associate produced *Extreme by Design* (2012, PBS) and *The Art of Doing It Yourself* (2011, PBS). Her documentary short, [Old People Driving](#) (2010, Mill Valley Film Festival), was broadcast on PBS News Hour as part of the Economist Film Project and won best documentary at the Phoenix Film Festival.

Shaleece's films have received support from ITVS, California Humanities, Berkeley Film Foundation, Fledgling Fund, Film Independent, IFP, among others. She is a 2015 Film Independent Documentary Lab Fellow, a 2012 Working Films Fellow and a member of the Queer Producers Collective.

In addition to filmmaking, Shaleece has taught at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, the Berkeley Advanced Media Institute, and UCLA Extension. Shaleece previously worked as an editorial photographer and radio producer and was a founding staff member of the national oral history project, [StoryCorps](#). She is a graduate of the documentary film program at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism.

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