



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NCAVP Mourns the Losses of 4 Youth to Alleged Hate-Related Suicide; Offers Resources and Support to End Anti-LGBTQ Violence

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) joins lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities across the country as we mourn for four youth reported to have died in hate-related suicides over the past two weeks. Billy Lucas, 15, Seth Walsh, 13, Asher Brown, 13, and Tyler Clementi, 18, all faced violence from their peers simply for being perceived as LGBTQ and each young person reportedly committed suicide rather than endure the daily violence of anti-LGBTQ harassment, bullying, and hate. NCAVP joins with local organizations in their home states in offering its condolences to their loved ones, and calls on LGBTQ people and our allies, including educators, parents, administrators and legislators to take immediate action to prevent such tragedies and to support LGBTQ youth in their rights to safety, inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression.

Earlier this month, 15-year-old Billy (William) Lucas, of Greensburg, Indiana, allegedly committed suicide, in an act that is suspected to have stemmed from daily bullying about his perceived sexual orientation. Seth Walsh, 13, of Tehachapi, California passed away on Tuesday, September 28th after he reportedly attempted to hang himself on September 19th. It is reported that Walsh identified as gay and suffered constant hate-motivated bullying from peers.

On September 23rd, Asher Brown, 13, of Houston, Texas, reportedly shot himself, which his parents believe came as a result of allegedly unchecked anti-gay cruelty and harassment at his school. In response to Asher's suicide, NCAVP member program, The Montrose Counseling Center in Houston, Texas, participated a week early in the ["You Are Loved" Chalk Message Project](#), filling their parking lot with chalk messages of hope and inspiration for one another. Deb Murphy, Youth Services Specialist, said, "As September is Suicide Prevention month, we hope that words of encouragement from other youth and members of the community will find a way of comforting those whose pain and anguish are at the point of being unbearable."

In another heartbreaking incident, NCAVP learned yesterday that a student at Rutgers University in New Jersey, Tyler Clementi, 18, reportedly jumped from the George Washington Bridge on September 22nd and is presumed dead, shortly after discovering that two fellow students broadcast footage of a sexual encounter between Tyler and another man. "As a Rutgers University alumnus, I am devastated by the possible suicide of Tyler Clementi," Jarad Ringer, Hate Violence and Police Relations Program Coordinator at the New York City Anti-Violence Project, states, "My college experience was a positive one and helped me foster great pride in my identities as a gay man and activist. This incident is a reminder that hate-motivated violence and harassment of LGBTQ communities can happen anywhere, including progressive and LGBTQ-friendly campuses. We send our condolences to Tyler's family and loved ones and to the larger Rutgers University community."

Through our work with LGBTQ survivors of violence, NCAVP knows that despite recent societal shifts, the American climate of anti-LGBTQ discrimination, hatred and violence remains a great danger to LGBTQ people, especially youth. Tragically, these suicides are evidence of the urgent need to redouble our efforts to make all schools, campuses and communities safe for LGBTQ youth, particularly because we know that LGBTQ youth may not feel able to ask for help at home. School-based bullying and harassment are forms of hate violence and are reinforced by broader structural discrimination in society at large. NCAVP's recent [Hate Violence Report](#) indicates that anti-LGBTQ hate murders are at the second highest rate in a decade, and demonstrates the severity of the anti-LGBTQ sentiments that may have driven these youth to suicide. NCAVP calls on local, state, and federal governments to eradicate discriminatory anti-LGBTQ practices in their institutions, and to dedicate resources to challenging bullying, harassment, and hate violence wherever they occur.

In honor of Billy, Seth, Asher and Tyler, NCAVP asks the general public to commit themselves to fostering a culture of respect for all LGBTQ people at home, at school, at work and everywhere. We offer the below resources and action steps to help communities heal and to support you in your work to end anti-LGBTQ hate.

GET SUPPORT

Anti-LGBTQ bullying and hate impacts individuals as well as the public at large. Please contact NCAVP member organizations and our allies for supportive counseling, resources and encouragement:

- [The Trevor Project](#) offers suicide prevention and mental health resources for LGBTQ teens, including their 24-hour Lifeline: 1-866-4-U-TREVOR (866-488-7386).
- Learn more about the risks of [Suicide & Back-to-School Bullying](#) in a recent article by the Montrose Counseling Center in Houston, Texas.
- The [It Gets Better Project](#) was created by author Dan Savage to send inspirational messages to LGBTQ youth.
- [Indiana Equality](#) is advocating for strengthening Indiana's bullying laws and is providing public education activities. To learn more, contact: ieinfo@indianaequality.org or 888.567.0750
- [Pride Center of New Jersey](#): info@pridecenter.org; 732.846.2232
- [Garden State Equality](#)
- [The New York City Anti-Violence Project](#): 24 Bilingual (English/Spanish) Hotline: 212.714.1141; [Online Hate Violence Reporting Form](#)

TAKE ACTION

Below are just a few of the steps that you can take to challenge anti-LGBTQ hate:

- Learn about [GLSEN's resources](#) for students, educators, and community members to challenge anti-LGBTQ bullying, harassment and hate in schools.
- Email info@ncavp.org to connect with an anti-violence program or initiative in your area, or to learn more about starting your own.
- Sign the New York City Anti-Violence Project's ["I'm anti violence"](#) pledge and assert your belief that all people should live free from fear of violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

This release is a product of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP), a coalition of 40 anti-violence organizations that monitor, respond to, and work to end hate, domestic and sexual violence, HIV-related violence, and other forms of violence affecting LGBTQ communities. NCAVP is a program of the New York City Anti-Violence Project.