



**Denver Office**

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To Director John Nunemaker and the Cast and Crew of ***The Laramie Project*** at Kensington Arts Theatre:

I would like to thank you for taking on the task of producing *The Laramie Project*. It's been more than 17 years since my son Matthew was murdered in an anti-gay hate crime in Laramie, Wyoming. Matt wanted simply to finish his studies so he could go out and do good things in the world. His death because of violence rooted in hate and ignorance has set me on a journey I would never have imagined for myself before that tragedy. Continuing to educate people about the issues is part of that journey.

*The Laramie Project* with its powerful messages, unfortunately, continues to be relevant in the world today as you have unfortunately seen recently very close to home. Bullying, hate crimes, young people committing suicide because they are harassed and targeted for being who they are; all of these events surround us on a daily basis and remind us that there is much work to be done.

Dennis and I believe *The Laramie Project* is an invaluable educational piece about how hate impacts society, and we support and thank those who choose to engage in what can be an emotional and sometimes controversial process. Each individual company that produces this piece brings a fresh perspective to the issues and more minds and voices to the discussion. Sometimes I hear detractors of *The Laramie Project* refer to it as "that gay play". It is not a play about being gay, or about encouraging anyone to be gay. It's about being targeted, hurt, murdered for being different or perceived to be different, whatever that difference may be, and how those actions affect your life and the lives of all around you.

Again, I thank you for having the courage to engage in a production that can raise so many emotional and personal issues, and encourage you to use this opportunity to form discussions about how to create a more civil, compassionate, and just world. We applaud and appreciate your efforts.

Best wishes,

Judy Shepard  
Co-Founder and President, The Matthew Shepard Foundation