



## LOCAL SCREENING ORGANIZING KIT

Thank you for your interest in bringing our new educational campaign about youth and gender to your hometown. Enclosed you will find information to help you plan a strategic event that unites different movements and sparks dialogue and action in your community.

Please read through this document and consider all of the possible approaches you may take in planning your event. After you have had a chance to do some initial brainstorming and outreach, please let us know. There is a short survey and agreement that we will ask you to complete before finalizing the details of your event and moving forward with publicizing a screening.

If you have any questions or concerns about this process, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We look forward to working with you!

All the best,

The GroundSpark staff  
[info@groundspark.org](mailto:info@groundspark.org)



## 1. Your Audience

*Straightlaced* has the potential to bring a number of different audiences and activists together for a united dialogue, and we encourage you to think through other organizations, people, or agencies that might be able to drive an audience to your event. It is important to have a broad, diverse base of support for this film – geographically, culturally, socioeconomically, and professionally – to move ahead with your event. **If you would like some guidance on messaging the film for different audiences, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.**

Please consider reaching out directly to some of these suggested allies:

**Girls Advocacy & Development** – local chapters of Girls, Inc. YWCAs, Girl Scouts, girls athletic networks, state-wide women’s networks;

**Youth Development** – afterschool programs, boys and girls clubs, YMCA’s, community youth programs;

**Educators** – local chapters of the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers, local school district leaders, progressive teaching networks, local chapters of the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN);

**Other school professionals** – local chapters of the American School Counselor Association and National Association of School Psychologists, Safe and Drug Free Schools personnel, Title IX administrators, school nurses, and school-based social workers;

**School Climate** – local bullying prevention groups, violence prevention education, local safe schools coalitions (for some ideas on safe schools coalitions in your area, please visit: <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/blackboard-organizations.html>);

**Anti-bias education** – Local chapters of the Anti-Defamation League, centers for peace and justice or local chapters of the National Conference for Community and Justice;

**Gender/Women’s Studies/Education/Social Work** - departments and community centers at local universities and colleges;

**Domestic Violence Prevention** – State domestic violence coalitions, local counseling centers;

**Youth** - youth leadership programs, local Gay/Straight Alliances in high schools and universities, diversity clubs, youth cultural programs, youth activism groups;

**LGBT** – local LGBT community centers and advocacy organizations such as state equality networks, LGBT family organizations, and chapters of Parents and Family of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG);

**Sexual Education** – local comprehensive sexual education advocates, Planned Parenthood chapters, sexual education teachers;

**Arts/film** – local film festivals, arts and film centers, independent filmmakers, filmmaking departments at local universities and colleges;

**Religious** – progressive religious educators, Quaker, Jewish Reform/Renewal, Unitarian churches, United Church of Christ congregations, Metropolitan Community Churches, interfaith alliances and coalitions, and other religious leaders;

**Government Leaders** – city offices of human rights and equity, mayor’s office youth, gender, LGBT, or education liaisons, city council members, and school board members.

## 2. The Venue and Date

The time and place that you hold a screening can influence your audience, so it is important to think about these logistics with a lens of making the event as accessible to as many audiences as possible.

Some possible event spaces include:

- Commercial or independent theaters that rent out their space
- Film centers, museums or libraries that allow public events
- University or even high school auditoriums
- Community centers or churches

Possible venues should have the appropriate A/V connections, including a projector and large screen to show the film on. Projection systems can be expensive to rent, so ideally should be included in the venue space. The film is available on DVD. We strongly discourage playing the film on a television screen. Also please try to avoid spaces with fixed lighting that is not adjustable and spaces that have poor acoustics.

The cost of renting a venue space is also important. If this is a free event, you and your local partners will need to cover all venue costs, so you may wish to find a free or donated space. If you are going to sell tickets, part of the profits can cover the cost of facilities rental.

Another issue to consider when choosing a venue is its accessibility for different communities. Is the space you are considering accessible to those with physical disabilities? Is it near public transportation for those without their own vehicles? Is there ample parking for those with cars? Is it in a part of town that is neutral turf for people of different races and economic classes?

Please remember that the most direct audience for this film is youth, so avoid having your screening during school hours, or too late at night on a weekday. Much of the audience may be educators, and it is difficult to reach out to them during school holidays, such as over summer or spring break. Avoid having your screening during, or right after, these vacations. You may wish to offer food or childcare to ensure the biggest turnout.

### **3. The Outreach Process**

We cannot overstate the importance of reaching out to a broad array of audiences, and considering racial, class, and professional diversity in your outreach efforts. Again, if you would like advice about messaging this film for different audiences, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

To support your outreach efforts, GroundSpark has created an editable flyer that can be customized with your event information and passed around electronically or printed and posted. We strongly encourage you to do both. It may take several emails and phone calls to reach a key gatekeeper, but once you have, an announcement of your event can get sent out to thousands of people you normally would not reach. The flyer is available at [groundspark.org/straightlaced/straightlaced-events](http://groundspark.org/straightlaced/straightlaced-events).

It is best to start with an email to your own networks, as well as reaching out to some of the allied professions listed above. Get people you contact to forward your announcement out to their own lists. If you are having trouble reaching some of these networks with an email, consider faxing the flyer. Also consider posting an announcement in local school newsletters, religious community bulletins, library- and other community-events calendars, and other local publications.

You can also print out copies of the flyer and post them on college and high school campuses, at coffee shops or cafes, and around town on community information boards. Local film centers or independent theaters will often allow you to post information about film premieres in your area.

Some of the best visibility will come from posting your event on online calendars. Just do a google search for the name of your hometown and the word 'event.' – lots of options will come up! Also consider reaching out to local media to write advance stories about your event, or print it's details in their events listings. Some public radio stations will even let you record a public service announcement that they will air for free!

## 4. The Screening Itself

### *Introducing the Film*

To welcome guests, please introduce your organization, and mention any relevant local happenings related to the film. Try to create an uplifting and inspiring tone about the ability for youth to talk about these issues today.

It is important to point out any discussion or reception happening after the screening, and invite people to stay. More of the film unfolds during the credits, so ask that people stay seated even when the credits are rolling. **Please do not turn the lights on until after the credits are finished.**

When introducing the film to your audience, it is good to pre-empt some of the questions that people inevitably have. Please include the below information in your introduction:

*Straightlaced* was filmed in high schools across the country. The GroundSpark production team reached out to teachers and youth groups about our efforts. Students were assigned to write short paragraphs about their experiences with gender roles. GroundSpark reviewed those statements and then went to selected high schools to hold more in-depth interviews. Based on those interviews, a handful of students were asked to come to San Francisco for a film shoot. The film crew also visited several other students in their hometowns.

The film is serving as the cornerstone for a national campaign to ignite dialogue about the ways rigid gender stereotypes and homophobia affect ALL youth. It will be coupled with a high school curriculum, professional development series, and a national media campaign. The film can be ordered at [www.groundspark.org](http://www.groundspark.org), where you can also find out more information about GroundSpark's work.

### *Building Room for Discussion*

Creating a program for the evening that helps generate energy and excitement is one of the most important parts of planning. We strongly encourage our screening partners to create a space in which attendees can process their feelings and move towards concrete action steps. This can take place through a number of formats:

- A post-screening reception at which guests can mingle and discuss the film and their reactions to it;
- A facilitator who can have the audience break into pairs or small groups to discuss their reactions and generate next steps for advocacy;
- A panel discussion featuring a diverse set of local activists, educators and youth that is open to audience questions;
- Preparing worksheets and handouts that can help participants think through their own advocacy and get plugged into local efforts

When choosing speakers and panelists, please remember to focus on representing diverse perspectives and backgrounds.

Sample Questions for Discussion:

How are all people, no matter their identity, affected by gender stereotypes?

How do the experiences of students in the film illustrate the complex intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality?

What do you think the film is saying about the connection between gender role expectations and homophobia?

How can we make school classrooms and youth cultures more supportive of gender non-conformity?

How can we bridge movements working on youth development issues to discuss gender and sexual identities?

How can adults better support youth to break beyond rigid stereotyping and bullying related to gender expression – and to feel comfortable allowing everyone to be their true selves?

## 5. Frequently Asked Questions About the Film

### **Q. Who is Hannah Landers and why is the film dedicated to her?**

A. Hannah is the young woman from Lexington, Kentucky who organized a memorial garden and hate-free zone after the suicide of her friend Josh Shipman. Hannah was tragically killed in a car accident in the middle of filming *Straightlaced*. Our staff was so inspired by her courageous efforts and uplifting attitude that we decided to dedicate the film in her name. We hope other students will find strength to breakthrough stereotypes in Hannah's words.

### **Q. How did you find the students in the film?**

A. After being invited by supportive teachers and school personnel, the *Straightlaced* producers visited many high schools across the country. In each one, they introduced themselves and the project, saying, "We are making a documentary about what it's like to be in high school and the pressures that students face just because they are male or female. Would anyone like to speak with us?" No matter where they were, hands shot up and students waited patiently for their 15-minute private meeting to tell us about their experiences, their fears, their frustrations, and their triumphs. From hundreds of initial interviews, we selected the 50 plus students who appear in the film. We told them that the parts we would use were when they told us the truth and to just be themselves. And they did just that.

### **Q. What are the main goals with the film and campaign?**

A. *Straightlaced* is the first-ever film and education campaign to directly address high school students about the wide-ranging effects of the pressure to conform to gender norms. The film and its accompanying educational resources will open a national dialogue about the pressures teens face to act certain ways just because they are male or female, the pervasive prejudice that fuels those pressures, and the courage it takes to just break through and be yourself. We hope *Straightlaced* will inspire youth and the adults who help shape their lives and equip them with tools to be advocates for broad systemic change on some of the most entrenched prejudices of our time.

### **Q. Will *Straightlaced* be coupled with an educational curriculum like other Respect For All Project films?**

A. Yes, like other Respect For All Project films, a curriculum guide will be developed that will allow teachers to use *Straightlaced* as an education tool to not only open up conversation about difficult issues, but also to teach core educational requirements.. Look for these in 2011!

## 6. Working With GroundSpark

### *Film and fees*

Most groups purchase *Straightlaced* prior to their screening. Once you have the film, and as long as your event is free to participants, there is no fee. If your screening is designed to support individuals, organizations or businesses through ticket sales or other revenue, please contact us. GroundSpark usually requests a modest percentage or fee for the use of our copyrighted material in this way. However, we may waive the fee on a case by case basis for allied organizations, schools, or community groups.

If you cannot afford the cost of the film, but wish to host a community screening, please contact us to discuss rental or borrowing options.

### *Other support and communications*

GroundSpark is happy to list your event on our website and post a notice on our Facebook page. Please send all details to us at least 3 weeks before the event (and for the Facebook post, please include the full text you would like posted, along with any links).

In addition, we are happy to help if you need assistance thinking through messaging about the film, how to introduce it, or what to include in your post-screening conversation.

After the event, please email and let us know how everything went! If you have borrowed a DVD, please return it. And if you could send us an estimate of how many people attended, we love to keep track of that information.

Thanks so much. We hope you have a great event!