

# Close to Home

Suicide resources and hotlines listed below

By Alex Zoellner '19

On August 23, Jamel Myles opened the eyes of many. What would you do, if you saw someone getting severely bullied? Would you bully someone because of their race, gender, or religion? How about their sexuality? What would you do if someone took their life, because of such abuse? Would you change your ways?

What would we do?

What have we done?

Jamel Myles was a fourth grader at Joe Shoemaker Elementary School in Denver. Going into the summer before his fourth grade year, Jamel came out, as gay, to his family. He also started wearing fake fingernails and dressing more femininely. Ultimately, with an impressive amount of pride, he began his fourth grade year by coming out to his classmates, on his own volition. He got bullied for it. So much so in fact, that he took his own life, only four days into his fourth grade year.

The actions of Jamel's close minded peers are truly heinous. The pain and devastation is sincerely horrendous. He was an incredible light and inspiration for many that will be sincerely missed. Especially for Jamel's mother, Leia Pierce. Jamel was "the kindest, most gentlest soul I've ever met" said Pierce in an interview with [NBC News](#). To make matters worse Jamel's family, especially Pierce, has faced tremendous hate and harassment in light of this tragic death. The same animosity and aggravation that tormented Jamel has rolled over onto his family. Why? Because of certain individual's abnormal and vile bigotry for something as innate as sexuality.

Despite everything, Pierce continues in the battle to spread awareness about the damages caused by bullying and suicide so that no parent has to experience such a tragedy ever again. Her efforts to assert love and acceptance stand as an ideal image of how LGBTQ+ issues, especially those pertaining to bullying and suicide, should be approached and how one should treat others regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

So, why can't we do this? With an event such as this so close to home, we need to start talking about this more. The likelihood of LGBTQ+ youth to attempt suicide is almost five times as likely compared to heterosexual youth (according to the Center for Disease Control), and we don't take a public stance on this? If we don't start talking now, then when will we?

Suicide resources:

If you or anyone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts or depression, the following resources are available:

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** (800-273-8255): Speak with someone who will provide free and confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To learn how to help someone in crisis, call the same number.

**Colorado Crisis Services Hotline** (1-844-493-8255): If you are in crisis or need help dealing with one, call 1-844-493-8255 or text "TALK" to 38255 to speak to a trained professional. When calling Colorado Crisis Services, you will be connected to a crisis counselor or trained professional with a master's or doctoral degree.

**The Trevor Project** (1-866-488-7386): A 24/7 resource for LGBT youth struggling with a crisis or suicidal thoughts. The line is staffed by trained counselors.

**Colorado Crisis Services Walk-In Locations:** Walk-in crisis service centers are open 24/7, and offer confidential, in-person crisis support, information and referrals to anyone in need.

**Safe 2 Tell Colorado** (1-877-543-7233): A 24/7 resource for students to anonymously keep yourself or someone you know safe from threats, harmful behaviors or dangerous situations. By calling, you can help stop a friend from committing suicide, get another student off drugs, or stop a bully from making other people miserable. If you have information about the following topics, please call.

**Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline** (1-844-264-5437): The best resource for readers to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

The number serves as a direct, immediate and efficient route to all Colorado's 64 counties and two tribal nations, which are responsible for accepting and responding to child abuse and neglect concerns. All callers are able to speak with a call-taker 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

## Really President Trump? Really Jim Acosta?

By Alex Zoellner '19

On November 7th, 2018 President Trump held a press conference about the midterms. Naturally, attending the press conference was CNN's Chief White House Correspondent, Jim Acosta. As expected, Acosta lead with a tough but very legitimate question. That question being; "why did you label the caravan as an invasion and do you believe that you demonized immigrants in this election?" His question came on the heels of a President Trump-sponsored campaign advertisement being pulled from NBC and Fox News because it contained a lie and exploited racism and xenophobia. Trump's response, interrupting Acosta, was that it was simply a difference of opinion and that if those within the caravan wanted to enter into the U.S., they would need to come in legally.

Trump's response was swiftly followed by Acosta refusing to relinquish the microphone and badgering Trump with further questioning. When a female intern attempted to take the mic from Acosta he refused, but never laid his hands on the intern. Just a few hours later Sarah Huckabee Sanders made the announcement that Acosta's media hard pass would be revoked "until further notice." As such, when Acosta attempted to enter the White House on Thursday, he was denied access, leading to both a comment and video being posted on Twitter.

Acosta's tweet was soon succeeded by Sarah Sanders posting a doctored video of Acosta's interaction with the intern on Twitter. This was done in an attempt to claim justification for the White House's actions. The claim the administration made was that it "will never tolerate a reporter placing his hands on a young intern."

Let me start off by saying that no key players in this debacle are innocent, not Trump, and not Acosta. Acosta has a very extensive and contentious background with Trump. In a democracy and a land with freedom of the press, as many political positions as possible should be heard via media.

To this point, Acosta has just been doing his job, garnering praise from many of his peers. But, that doesn't mean that you can abandon professionalism. To that end, the way in which he took up everyone else's time and carried himself was distinctly unprofessional. However, it was by no means illegal and was absolutely within the confines of the First Amendment and his role as a reporter. Badgering someone with tough questions is a part of journalism.

Sometimes, one must play a little rough in the pursuit of journalism. That's just how it is. The President, however, has very little to no say as to whom is allowed to interview him, what questions they ask, or how many questions they ask. Sometimes, you just gotta suck it up and answer some questions. That is professionalism. And Trump most certainly didn't do that.

It is equally as unprofessional to call someone a "terrible person" on the stand during a presidential press conference as to not relinquish the microphone, at said press conference. That is not how a professional acts, and that is especially not how the president should act. Furthermore, no one can suspend a press pass without a legitimate cause for doing so. If you could do that, then you would be opening the door for interviewees to choose their interviewers. That doesn't sound like a free press to me. Acosta's pass was reinstated.

To make matters worse, the video of Acosta's interaction with the intern, posted on

Twitter by Sarah Huckabee Sanders, is clearly doctored. Infowars — which is where the doctored video originates — clearly altered the speed of Acosta's arm and added special effects like zooming in and slowing down. This, of course, has been confirmed by multiple video analysts such as Tom Albright — the research director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University — and Shane Raymond of Storyful — a social-media intelligence firm that verifies media content. In addition, witnesses within the room — and most people who have seen the video — have attested to the falsehood of Sarah Sander's claims that Acosta laid his hands on the female intern.

Ultimately, while Acosta was impeccably unprofessional, he was doing his job. President Trump and his administration acted dangerously, irresponsibly, and lied. Everyone is guilty of something.

# Get Out and Vote

Links to useful voting information and resources can be found below

By Alex Zoellner '19

In a democracy, those within the community are given a voice to choose their elected officials, who in turn are elected to represent their constituents within the government. In addition, members of the community are given a voice to speak out on specific pieces of legislature. This is done by way of the aforementioned legislations appearing on the ballot, for constituents to vote in favor of or against the proposed legislations. As such, the most impactful way to have your voice heard on such issues is to vote. If you feel strongly enough on an issue, you can support pieces of legislation or officials running for election by way of sponsorships, such as ad campaigns or charitable donations.

This is the way voting works in a democracy

So then, why do potential constituents who don't vote, or worse aren't even registered to vote, complain about the outcome of the ballot. You didn't do your job as an American citizen to voice your opinion on something you clearly care about. If you don't vote or aren't registered to vote, you have forfeited your right to speak on such issues by way of failing to exercise your right to its fullest extent. Obviously, if you are ineligible to vote, for numerous reasons such as not being at least 18 years of age or not being a legal U.S. citizen, this doesn't apply to you.

In one of the most controversial presidential elections in recent history, only about 137,000,000 people voted. This translates to about 59.5% of "eligible voters" casting their ballot. Keep in mind that the number of eligible voters (which was roughly 232 million), consists only of those who are registered to vote and meet the other voting eligibility requirements. The percent, of the total number (about 309 million) of people who were old enough to vote, that did was only about 44.5% (roughly 77 million people). And look where this has brought us, millions of people were/are incredibly upset about the turnout, when a staggering 95 million eligible voters didn't vote. There is no other word to describe this than absurd. If you didn't vote you have no room to complain. At the end of the day, it isn't about you, it's about the communal voice.

So, register to vote and make your voice heard.

**Useful ballot information websites:**

**Register to Vote**

<https://www.sos.state.co.us/voter/pages/pub/olvr/verifyNewVoter.xhtml>

## **Ballotpedia**

Overall this website is one of, if not the most, helpful for informing you on both what is the current state of affairs in reference to our elected officials and also what is on the ballot. The “[Sample Ballot Lookup](#)”, “[How To Vote](#)”, and “[Poll Opening and Closing Times](#)” functions are especially helpful.

<https://ballotpedia.org/Colorado>

## **U.S. Election Assistance Commission**

While this website is not going to tell you about your specific ballot for this upcoming primary election, it is going to tell you how to use the polling equipment, where to vote, and more general pieces of information of this nature.

<https://www.eac.gov>