

A look into LGBTQ+

As October comes to an end, students recount their personal stories for LGBTQ+ History Month

Courtney Faust

Alli Ryan | Co-Editor in chief

"I'm not broken."

And no, she does not need to be fixed.

Nor does she want that random man staring at her while she holds hands with her girlfriend. She is expressing her true self—a freedom that so many before her fought for.

Begged for.

Risked for.

Even died for.

Senior Courtney Faust has known since seventh grade that she was a part of the LGBTQ+ community. After feeling confused and slightly disconnected from her peers, she was led to the discovery of her identity. In the whirlwind of terms and labels she slowly found her place, using the internet as her usher.

"I went home and just spent a day googling different orientations because I had been kind of involved in the LGBTQ+ community before just as an ally. And then I was

like 'well hold on, there is a plus at the end of this, what all is in that plus,'" Faust said. "So I googled it and I found a couple things that kind of fit and then I saw asexual...that was kind of the missing piece that just solved the puzzle for me."

A label that fits, just like a puzzle piece, perfectly and cohesively. Like Courtney, many people are not aware of the true scope of the LGBTQ+ community. The plus is oftentimes a mystery, with terms that are not as commonly used in everyday life. Faust's romantic orientation is biromantic, while her sexual orientation is asexual.

"Biromantic means that you are romantically attracted to two genders. For me, that is boys and girls...my sexual orientation is asexual which means I don't experience any sexual attraction to anybody," Faust said. "That being said, being asexual doesn't mean you can't have sex, it's just not something I feel any attraction to...not a factor for anyone that I am interested in."

But while Faust may have come to terms with this within herself, she still had the feat of telling those around her. Baring her truth to a level of vulnerability that can be so easily

judged by others. Not only her friends, but her family, and her peers that surrounded her.

It was something she eased into—a few jokes here, another there. Watching and observing their reaction, preparing for what they might think. But in the end it was not some grand unveiling. It was a slow realization from those around her, paired with confession from other friends who were always a part of the community.

"Just knowing that they would support me felt like I just finally let out this giant breath right before I passed out from holding it too long," Faust said.

And that release allowed her to sink into her life, date her girlfriend, find a place and be happy. Pursuing a life of just purely her—not listening to the voices claiming she's broken and wrong. Listening to herself and those around her, knowing she is just as she should be.

"I know that I have a big group of supporters behind me and I know that if anyone tries to tell me that what I am is wrong, or that I need to be fixed, I know that number one, I can handle it myself. But number two, I have many people to fall back on," Faust said.

Asexual
and
Biromantic

She/Her

photo // Caroline Es'Dorn

Anders Engelby

Alli Ryan | Co-Editor in chief

One ignorant scream down the hallway.

"Gay boy!"

But not one tear shed. For it's not a reflection of him, but them.

For Senior Anders Engelby, identifying as queer in high school comes with up and downs. He knew his family would be supportive, but there is always that risk of ignorance or anger being met at the end of a confession like this one.

"It isn't the most ideal situation for anyone, but I knew that my parents wouldn't be horribly negative surrounding the topic of that so I wasn't as nervous as some people may be. I feel like it might be top three moments in someone's life especially for someone who is queer," Engelby said.

Blessed with a supportive friend group and family, discrimination and close minded

people tend to roll off his back.

"I'm my own person, I'm completely comfortable with who I am. I have people around me that love me. But if you want to be ignorant, be ignorant," he said.

In 2021 not only is America surrounded by diversity, but a new gateway of understanding—the internet. It's a world of knowledge and connection for so many people within one community.

Social media rules the lives of many teens around the world, and for the LGBTQ+ community it can be an essential part of learning through others and finding a place to fit in.

For Engelby, after coming out to those around him social media was used as an outlet to learn more about the growing community.

"I definitely did do a lot of research. It wasn't me specifically going on the internet and looking up things, it was more me following people who are in the community through things like Twitter, Instagram...seeing posts from them and learning a lot through that."

The internet—something so widely used now, was almost a foreign concept to those in earlier years. If they wanted to know more

about the community, there was no way except asking those around them.

Now though there are many negatives that come along with social media, a few major positives benefit this community. Teens like Engelby can be connected to role models—people who not only entertain, but teach and connect to others within the community. For him, a producer named Sophie stands out as a favorite.

"She's not a singer but she did producing work and she was a trans woman. She was just like a huge inspiration to me. Her music just really connected with me. She talked a lot about her struggles and her music just really opened my eyes to not only a whole new spectrum of music, but also just a whole new area of the community."

Engelby continues to live his life as his true self. Not boxing or labeling himself and ignoring the people who try to bring him down. Wrapping up his high school years as a senior, he intends to bring that philosophy on with him in his next chapter of life.

Queer

He/Him

photo // Livi Ralston