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Amanda Vargas
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Sienna Villalba
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Rafael Villanueva
Amanda Villarreal
Jannie Villasana
Kiara Villasana
Kimani Wactor

Brianna Wade
Leslie Wami
Exodis Ward
Keysean Watson
Jovan Weathersby
Justin Wernitsch
Dylan Wilburn



WHAT'S YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON BEING ON OF THE YOUNGEST STUDENTS IN THEATER?



"It's so fun and interesting because I get to work with upper classmen and I get to learn from them, which is really great."
// MIGUEL MONTES

Alexander Wilson
Corey Wilson
Chase Wolfe
Deandro Worrell
Robert Wrenn



Arlene Yanez
Summer Yanez
Bertha Yerena
Brianna Young
Ana Yu



Patience Zambrano
Jose Zapata
Jonathan Zarate
Camrynn Ziegler
Citlaly Zumaya-Ornelas



GIANA SPURR

// Aspen Duran

Giana Spurr is a typical American teenager. She's hip to the latest fashions with her long, light brown braids and edgy T-shirts. She likes to listens to J. Cole and loves "Law and Order: SVU."

But even as a small child, Spurr, who is a sophomore, says she knew there was one thing that made her a little different from all the other kids in her class.

"In seventh grade, I played truth or dare with my sister and some friends. They dared me to kiss a girl and I really didn't hesitate," Spurr said. "I was like, 'I think I'm in love.'"

Although she struggled with feelings of guilt and insecurity, Spurr says she knew her true identity and decided she would no longer be ashamed about her truth. She identified with about 9 million people in America today. She was gay.

During the winter of her freshman year, Spurr, 15, made the announcement official. Spurr decided to embrace this part of her that made her just a little different from her classmates.

"It was difficult to let my parents know, but I just felt like it was a lot on me to keep it from them. It was getting tiring," Spurr said. "Now I really don't care anymore. It's just who I am."

When she came out, Spurr says her parents were concerned that deciding to be open about her sexual orientation might lead to unwelcome criticism and bullying from other people.

"Back in Georgia, some classmates would say that God hated me and that I would never be accepted," Spurr said. "When I was a freshman, some girls got ahold of my notebook without my permission and wrote hurtful things about me being gay."

According to the Human Rights Campaign, 92 percent of LGBT youth (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) say they hear negative messages about being LGBT.

"I was shy about it at first because I felt like I was doing something wrong," Spurr said. "After awhile though, I decided I didn't care. I like girls."

She found comfort and acceptance in her brother, who is her role model and best friend. According to Spurr, when she came out to her brother he embraced her with understanding.

"I decided to feel proud about it after I told my brother. He was like, 'I don't care, and we can totally talk about girls together all the time,'" Spurr said. "My brother is my everything, he's my best friend, so when I got his approval I thought that I was good."

In 10 years, Spurr sees herself with a degree from Syracuse University, living somewhere on the East Coast near family and working as a forensic scientist.

"I do want to help bring attention to the fact that we deserve equality and I want to try and make a change," Spurr said. "We deserve the same respect."

CAN'T SPELL PRIDE WITHOUT "I"

Photos by Bryan Chavez and Kimberly Gibson

