

Brianna Ghey. Katie Newhouse. Ariyanna Mitchell. Jeffrey Bright. Nikki Kuhnhausen. Yampi Méndez Arocho. Brayla Stone.

To paraphrase the late, great Terry Pratchett: “Don’t you know that someone’s not truly dead while their name is still spoken?”

Above are only a few of the names of teenagers murdered in the last few years, all but one in America or an American territory. They were all children. Murdered transgender or gender non-conforming children; most of them were also people of color.

Unfortunately, violence committed against teenagers, by adults or their fellow teens, is not uncommon. Violence in teenage romantic relationships comes in many forms and often leads to domestic violence in later life. Brianna Ghey was only 16 years old when she was stabbed to death in a park by two teenage suspects on Monday, February 13, 2023.

These were kids killing kids, and the hateful consider that some kind of victory in their twisted views. The hateful, the transphobic, the gender critical. They say that these deaths are not their fault; they will claim their pitiable rhetoric and despicable actions were not meant to do harm. And yet, they celebrate Brianna’s death. They insult a dead girl with vitriol and slurs. They mock her appearance, belittle her family and her friends. They try to remove any trace of Brianna’s humanity. They blame her for what happened; they blame Brianna for being who she was.

In 2023, currently not even two months into the year, this country has seen more than 350 anti-transgender legislations introduced in 36 states, including Colorado. Most of them clearly targeting transgender and gender non-conforming youth. Make no mistake, these bills are designed to be harmful. They are meant to hurt the most disenfranchised, marginalized, and oppressed minority of the human race. Any law that deliberately takes away rights and protections is meant to do harm, to dehumanize.

The Advocates of Lake County stand in opposition to hatred, as much as violence. The two often go hand-in-hand, metaphorically speaking. Our work is for all who suffer to find acceptance and safety. No one deserves to be hurt, especially for being who they are. Our hotline is available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week at (719) 486-3530.

Brianna Ghey, 16. Katie Newhouse, 19. Ariyanna Mitchell, 17. Jeffrey Bright, 16. Nikki Kuhnhausen, 17. Yampi Méndez Arocho, 19. Brayla Stone, 17.

They were all children. Children brave enough to live as their true, authentic selves. They were all beautiful human beings deserving of full, happy, and safe lives. And they were all murdered. Know their names. Say their names. Please, remember their names.

Transgender Liberation Now! Trans Rights are Human Rights! Trans Rights are Civil Rights!