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### **UGA profs' film focuses on support of diverse sexual orientations and gender presentations in Georgia schools**

Atlanta, Ga. – Two University of Georgia College of Education professors will host their Atlanta premiere of a new documentary film they produced that focuses on the need for research and effective interventions to reduce homophobia and heterosexism in public schools at Emory University's Harland Cinema on November 5<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

*Be There For Me: Collective Memories of LGBTQ Youth in High School* was produced by Anneliese Singh, an assistant professor, and Corey W. Johnson, an associate professor, in the College of Education's department of counseling and human development services. They created the film to reveal the experiences of LGBTQ high school students, with the ultimate objective of creating safer school settings.

"*Be There For Me* and its associated curriculum and resources are just one small contribution toward helping Georgia school systems respond to the needs of their lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students and to create safer spaces in schools," said Johnson. Singh notes "the film also helped spark the formation of the Georgia Safe Schools Coalition, a group of educators working to provide resources for school teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents to address the increasing amount of LGBTQ-bullying and violence in Georgia schools."

The brutal murder of a gender non-conforming adolescent in Oxnard, Calif., by his 14-year-old classmate in 2008, the suicides of 11-year olds Carl-Walker Hoover in Boston, MA and Jaheem Hererra in Dekalb County who experienced gay bullying, and similar but less tragic incidents in Athens-Clarke County inspired the professors to produce the documentary, Johnson said.

The documentary was filmed primarily at Clarke Central High School in Athens, with some additional shots filmed at Emory University in Atlanta. The cast includes Johnson

and Singh, as well as Women's Studies professor Shannon Miller, three UGA students and one from Emory University.

The film was directed and filmed by Jyoti and Rishi Kaneria who represent their work as a glimpse into lives and experiences that are not normally represented in mainstream media.

The film, premiering on Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. at Emory University's Harland Cinema and runs approximately one hour and will be followed by a panel discussion with Singh and Johnson, the filmmakers, and the cast.

The documentary is sponsored by the UGA Vice President for Public Service and Outreach, which provided a \$6000 grant to do this research and outreach, and was completed in partnership with the Georgia Safe Schools Coalition, GLOBES, Lambda Alliance and Emory Pride. Copies of the DVD can be ordered through

[www.georgiasafeschoolscoalition.org](http://www.georgiasafeschoolscoalition.org)

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