

# AFFIRMING NEWS

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## I Am Jazz

"I Am Jazz" is the story of a transgender child based on the real-life experience of co-author Jazz Jennings. From the time she was two years old, Jazz knew that she had a girl's brain in a boy's body. She loved pink and dressing up as a mermaid and didn't feel like herself in boys' clothing. This confused her family, until they took her to a doctor who said that Jazz was transgender and that she was born that way. Jazz's story is based on her real-life experience and she tells it in a simple, clear way that will be appreciated by picture book readers, their parents, and teachers. Jazz Jennings is an American YouTube personality, spokesmodel, television personality, and LGBT rights activist. Jennings, a transgender woman, is notable for being one of the youngest publicly documented people to be identified as transgender. Her parents noted that Jennings was clear on being female as soon as she could speak. Jennings received national attention in 2007 when an interview with Barbara Walters aired on 20/20, which led to other high-profile interviews and appearances. Jennings hosts a series of YouTube videos about her life, titled "I Am Jazz". She also stars in the TLC reality TV series, I Am Jazz, which features Jazz and her family "dealing with typical teen drama through the lens of a transgender youth." The series premiered in 2015 and just premiered their sixth season in 2020.

### Question:

How do I make myself more approachable to people who are LGBTQ?

### Answer:

Show that you are comfortable talking about sexuality and gender topics. Don't assume that everyone you interact with is heterosexual or cisgender. Use inclusive language. Confront others who make homo/ transphobic jokes or remarks. Become knowledgeable about LGBTQ concerns by reading books and attending events/activities sponsored by LGBTQ orgs.

## Delwin Vriend: Vriend Vs Alberta

Delwin Vriend was born in 1966 and was the center of a landmark provincial and federal legal case. *Vriend vs Alberta* was concerned with the inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected human right in Canada. Vriend attended private Christian elementary and secondary schools before enrolling at The King's College (now The King's University) in Edmonton. Vriend was asked to work at The King's College as a laboratory coordinator and chemistry lab instructor. He worked in that capacity for three years. This came to a halt when in 1991, Vriend, who was open within his congregation about being in a gay relationship, was fired because his sexual orientation was deemed incompatible with the newly created statement of religious belief adopted by King's. Vriend attempted to file a discrimination complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission, but was refused on the grounds that sexual orientation was not protected under the province's human rights code. He subsequently sued the Government of Alberta and its Human Rights Commission because he believed that the Alberta Act violated his equality rights as guaranteed under S. 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In 1994, an Alberta court ruled that sexual orientation must be treated as a protected class under human rights legislation. The provincial government subsequently appealed and in 1996 the decision was overruled by the Alberta Court of Appeal. This decision was then appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of *Vriend v. Alberta*, who finally ruled in 1998 that provincial governments could not exclude protection of individuals from human rights legislation on the basis of sexual orientation. Despite popular misunderstanding, the Vriend case was never against King's, and Vriend never pursued a human rights complaint against the institution. The Supreme Court decision in Vriend vs. Alberta was then later used to argue provincial cases against bans on same-sex marriage throughout Canada.