

“There are two kinds of people in the world: good people and good people in pain... it’s a hopeful statement because there’s always something we can do to ease another’s pain.”



Teaching Empathy Institute presents

Finding Howard

The Legacy of a Song

“Finding Howard: The Legacy of a Song” A Film from Teaching Empathy Institute
Directed by David Levine & James Fossett Produced by David Levine
Scripted by Paul Brown Cinematography and Editing by James Fossett

www.FindingHoward.org

Finding Howard

The Legacy of a Song

A film from
Teaching Empathy Institute
51min | English
Digital | 16:9 | Stereo
findinghoward.org/press-kit

Screening Info & Sales

Jodi Palinkas
Teaching Empathy Institute
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“Definitely a film that needs to be seen and shared by teachers and parents - as well as any, and all of us - as part of our lives moving forward. Thank you, thank you.”

Richard Lewis
Author
*Living By Wonder:
The Imaginative Life
of Childhood*

“What perfect timing and what a gift that is desperately needed right now.”

Scarlett Lewis
Founder
Jesse Lewis Choose
Love Movement



Synopsis

Finding Howard: The Legacy of a Song is a film about empathy, forgiveness, and hope. Through inspiring conversations with educators, community leaders, activists, and scholars, as well as deeply touching letters written by children across the US and Canada, *Finding Howard: The Legacy of a Song* tells the story of how a song and the work in schools created by an inspired educator can be a model for creating communities of belonging and safety for all.

Lee Domann, a Nashville songwriter, felt years of regret over a bullying incident that took place against Howard Ray, one of his classmates in 7th grade. Being an insecure and lonely boy himself, Lee didn't defend Howard for fear of being outcast by his peers. The memory of what happened that day inspired Lee to write a song about the way Howard was treated. Educator and Director of *Finding Howard: The Legacy of a Song*, David Levine, heard the song and began to perform it as part of his curriculum with students and adults across the United States. Over the past 30 years, the song has sparked conversations about empathy and left a legacy on countless people.

Finding Howard and its accompanying support materials, are a catalyst for educators and community members to create more compassionate life experiences for children.





Director's Statement

I decided to direct *Finding Howard* the morning after I learned Howard Ray had passed away. I had only met Howard once, but I had been singing a song about him in schools for over 30 years. The song, *Howard Gray* tells the true story of how a young boy stood by as Howard was harassed and bullied throughout their childhood. It is written by Lee Domann, a Nashville songwriter, from his own point of view and shares the challenging lessons he learned about regret and compassion. As an educator, I had been in search of ways to create learning experiences about empathy and caring that were both memorable and hopeful. Upon hearing *Howard Gray* for the first time in 1987, I knew I had found what I had been looking for. Two weeks later, I had my students round up the chairs in our classroom, and I sang *Howard Gray* for the first time. Those kids had many questions such as: Why did they treat Howard that way? Why did Lee remain silent? Whatever happened to Howard? The next day, one of my colleagues asked if I could sing it for her class and the "Howard Gray Experience" was born. I have been singing *Howard Gray* and using its lyrics to spark conversations about empathy with students all over the country ever since. In our film, we introduce the viewer to Lee and some of his childhood classmates who reminisce about Howard and his family and how they were outcasts because they were treated poorly because of where they lived and how little money they had. We also meet Howard's daughter Terri who shares what a gentle and kind man Howard was. We hear some of the more than 2,000 letters children have written to both Howard and Lee through the years. And in the end, we are all challenged by educators, scholars and parents to hear the lessons from *Howard Gray* as a unifying call to action to create communities of belonging and safety for all.

David Levine
Stone Ridge, New York
May 2021

The Cast



“ Love means putting yourself last, and I know some people may see that as being weak but it ends up makes you stronger.

LeShawn Parker

“ There are two kinds of people in the world: good people and good people in pain. And it's a hopeful statement because there's always something we can do to ease another's pain.

Scarlett Lewis



“ What do you do if it's inevitable in the classroom that in-groups and out-groups are going to develop? What you do is to create a sense of connection so everyone is a part of that in-group.

Kimberly Schonert-Reichl

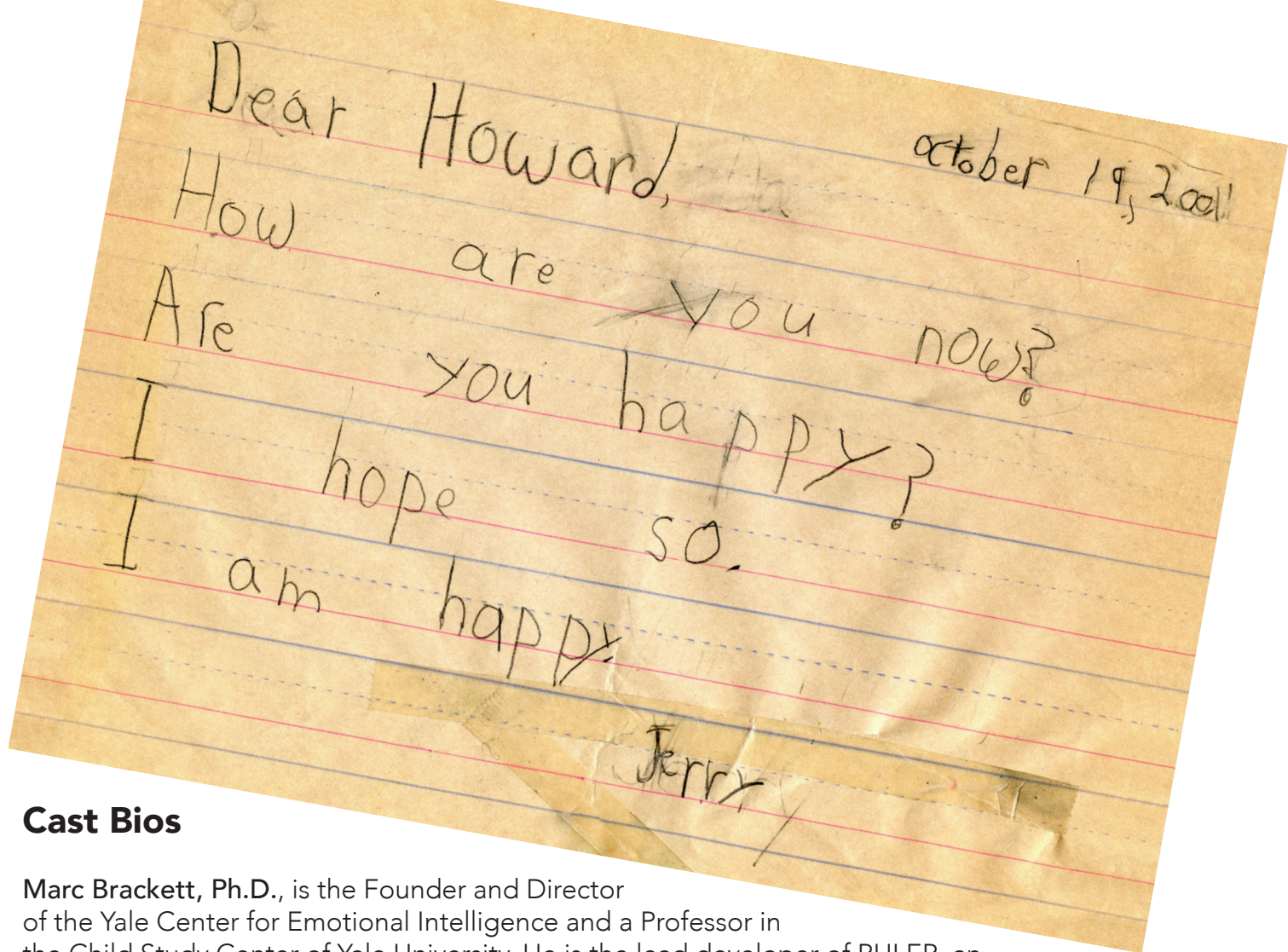
“ This is community building. It's about coming together around a single issue that affects all of us.

David Levine



“ For me, mentoring younger students is about being more of an inspiration. Being an example, and letting them know there is a way out of any situation that they are in.”

Donny Mapes



Cast Bios

Marc Brackett, Ph.D., is the Founder and Director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and a Professor in the Child Study Center of Yale University. He is the lead developer of RULER, an evidence-based approach to social and emotional learning that has been adopted by nearly 2,000 pre-K through high schools across the United States and in other countries. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

Dr. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl is an Applied Developmental Psychologist and a Professor in Human Development, Learning, and Culture program in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Known as a world renowned expert in the area of social and emotional learning (SEL), Dr. Schonert-Reichl has been involved with many scholarly committees and consultancies. She serves as a Board Member of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), an advisor to UNESCO's Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) on SEL, a member of the Educational Testing Service's panel on research, and an advisor to the Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education, among others.

Lee Domann is a songwriter, storyteller, and modern-day troubadour. He has recorded seven solo albums in his 35 year career. His songs have been recorded by a variety of artists, including Kathy Mattea, Riders in the Sky, Mark Lowry, and John Allan Cameron. His music is eclectic, embracing the roots of Celtic, folk, gospel, country and he plays in a variety of settings and regions. He lives in Nashville, TN with his wife Norma and their dog, Conrad.

Cast Bios ...continued

Dr. Chelsea Brown is the Assistant Principal of Northport Middle School. She is a life-long resident of Northport, NY.

Cathy Barnett is a life-long resident of Oskaloosa, Kansas and childhood friend of Lee Domann. She is the owner and operator of Cathy's Style Shop in Oskaloosa Kansas.

Howard Ray was a classmate of Lee Domann's in elementary school. He is the inspiration for Lee's song "Howard Gray".

Wanda LoBianco is the Principal of George Washington Elementary School in Kingston, NY.

David Levine After working with school districts across the country as a teacher, trainer, facilitator, designer and coach for 32 years, David created The Teaching Empathy Institute in 2016. He saw the need for a different way of engaging students and adults in the work of empathy development. So he developed a set of tools and practices to introduce and cultivate belonging in schools. The overarching goal for all of TEI's work is to help individuals, schools, and entire communities transform through dialogue, storytelling, and the celebration of human connection.

LeShawn Parker is a lifelong resident of Kingston, NY. He is Director of Safety and Prevention for Kingston City Schools in Kingston, NY.

Donny Mapes is a Mentor for young African American youth in Kingston and Ellenville, NY for the Obama Foundation Initiative, My Brother's Keeper. He is also singer/songwriter in Kingston, NY.

Dr. Timothy Hoss is the school building administrator at Northport, New York School District.

Terry Ray Kruse is the daughter of Howard Ray. She lives in Lincoln, Kansas.

Scarlett Lewis is a mother, an artist, an avid horsewoman, and a new activist for peace. She is the founder of the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Foundation, created in honor of her son who was killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre in December 2012.

Nina Dawson is the Human Rights Commissioner and Youth Bureau Director in Ulster County New York. Based in Kingston, New York, she passionately strives to impact the lives of youth who live in areas of disparity through program funding. In her work, Nina engages with youth to discuss economic, social and mental issues that affect their lives.

Key Crew Bios



David Levine

Director & Executive Producer

David Levine is an educator, writer, and musician with more than thirty-five years of experience working in a multitude of educational settings as a teacher, community builder, and social and emotional learning specialist. David has worked with school districts throughout the United States and beyond, focusing on creating caring and compassionate school cultures where social and emotional learning and emotional intelligence are foundational belonging and relationship-building practices.

As a musician, songwriter, producer, and podcast host, David uses his songs and digital materials as learning tools, including the Music Dialogue Process, which inspires both children and adults to look within to make a positive difference with others. As a writer, he has authored six books and numerous journal articles and curricula materials that focus on empathy and emotional intelligence practices as community building and leadership tools.



James Fossett

Director & Producer

James Fossett is a visual artist who primarily works as a photographer and videographer, in addition to performance, public art and installation. He has participated in artist residencies, led workshops and lectured at; Bard College at Simon's Rock in Great Barrington, MA (USA),

The Academy for Untamed Creativity in Copenhagen, Denmark, The Academy for Modern Circus in Copenhagen, Denmark, The Ballinglen Arts Foundation in Ballycastle, Ireland, The State University of New York in New Paltz, NY, The Brooklyn Children's Museum, NY, Alfred University in Alfred, NY, Lawrence School in Brookline, MA, The Berkshire School in Sheffield, MA. He was awarded a Pro Arts Public Service Award from the City of Boston. Fossett received his MFA from The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. His work is shown both nationally and internationally.



Paul Brown

Scriptwriter & Interviewer

Paul Brown is a former NPR news reporter, producer, editor, and world newscaster. During his career at NPR's Washington, DC headquarters, he reported in-depth stories, interviewed sources on evolving issues worldwide, and wrote and delivered NPR's signature hourly morning newscasts. Paul is deeply interested in encouraging civil discourse, empathy and compassion in an open society.

He brings this interest to bear in his work for TEI. He's also a well-known music documenter and old-time banjo picker, fiddler and singer. He performs and teaches occasionally at festivals, camps and other venues.



Full Crew

Directed by

David Levine & James Fossett

Scripted by

Paul Brown

Director of Photography

James Fossett

Produced by

David Levine

Associate Producers

James Fossett, Paul Brown & Jodi Palinkas

Production Manager

Jodi Palinkas

Interviews

Paul Brown

Editing

James Fossett

Audio Recording

Dean Jones

No Parking Studios

Gideon Levine

Gidapollo Sound

Shane Kirsch

James Fossett

Sound Mastering

Alan Douches

West West Side Music

Camera Assistants

Ted Conway

Kari Giordano

William Koenig-Vinicombe

Sam Levine

Sound Assistants

Ted Conway

Sam Levine

Narration

Sharon Ball

Narration Production

Paul Brown

Trailer Editing

Jeanne Vitale

Open Sky Productions

Web & Graphic Design

Title Design

Sarah Burt

nographica.com



About Teaching Empathy Institute

TEI creates school communities of wellbeing, safety, and belonging. We help students and the adults who work with them build healthy relationships through flexible, simple, and award-winning strategies that foster dialogue and connection in the classroom and beyond.

We are empathy educators well-versed in research on the emotional needs of children with deep experience creating positive school communities. We aim to meet schools where they are - with no judgment - and help them get to where they want to be through parallel learning experiences for students, teachers, school leaders, and parents. Our resources are easy to access in digital and print formats, and designed for practical infusion into daily classroom life.

For more information about Teaching Empathy Institute please visit:
www.teachingempathyinstitute.org