

# Brookdale among stages for 'Laramie' play

By JENNIFER BRADSHAW  
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**MIDDLETOWN** — A cast of student and community performers participated Monday night in a movement that spanned the entire country with their performance of "The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later/Epilogue," presented by the Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Education Center at Brookdale Community College.

The center — along with 146 other theaters in all 50 states, Spain, Australia, Great Britain, Hong Kong and Canada — all hosted the play Monday, according to a prepared statement from the college.

Matthew Shepard, a homosexual University of Wyoming student, was brutally beaten and left tied to a fence for 18 hours in the college town Laramie. Several days later, on

**"It hasn't left us. It's something that we still have to change."**

— Dale Daniels, executive director of the Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Education Center at Brookdale Community College

Oct. 12, 1998, the 21-year-old died from his injuries at a hospital.

The piece, performed in monologues, chronicles the aftermath of the mur-

der. It is a follow-up to the play "The Laramie Project," in which the plays' authors, the Tectonic Theater Project, returned to Laramie 10 years after Shepard's death to conduct another round of interviews with residents, including both of his killers — Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson — and Shepard's mother, Judy.

It was followed by a live question-and-answer Web stream with the the Tectonic Theater Project.

Dale Daniels, executive director of the Brookdale center, said the piece is "very much about human rights issues."

"It hasn't left us," Dan-

iels said of the prejudice that remains against sexual orientation. "It's something that we still have to change."

"The Laramie Project" was the subject of local controversy in 2007, during a well-publicized battle between an Ocean Township High School drama coach and administration about whether the piece was suitable for a high school performance. The administration canceled it, but relented, and the play finally was performed.

The district administration's opposition reportedly stemmed from the opinion that the play was too provocative for the school community.