

# Free Mom Hugs

## Transcript

**00:00:00:16 - 00:00:02:29**

**ALEXSIS GLENN:**

There's this energy exchange.

**00:00:03:01 - 00:00:04:02**

**JOEL GEMINO:**

It is a symbol.

**00:00:05:03 - 00:00:09:04**

**JESSICA-JEAN DE LA VEGA:**

It's a sign of validation in your identity.

**00:00:09:13 - 00:00:11:05**

**MONICA GRIMM:**

It's intensely beautiful.

**00:00:11:05 - 00:00:37:05**

**SARA CUNNINGHAM:**

We call it Free Mom Hugs, the spark. And it's where the connection of humanity happens. The essence of humanity, a hug gives love. A hug takes love. We empower the world to celebrate the LGBTQIA+ community through visibility, education and conversation. And, yeah, we still give hugs. Our youngest son is Parker, is part of the reason why we're here.

**00:00:37:19 - 00:01:02:00**

**SARA CUNNINGHAM:**

He spent his whole life trying to come out to me, and I didn't take the news very well. When he turned 21, he met someone. And that's when we face the reality that I have a gay son. When Parker came out of his closet, I went into mine, and I had to really reexamine everything that I believed that prompted me to make the homemade button that read Free Mom Hugs.

**00:01:02:00 - 00:01:32:23**

**SARA CUNNINGHAM:**

And I went to a pride festival with that button on my son dress. And the first hug that I gave was to a beautiful young woman who said that it had been four years since she got a hug from her mother. And that moment, I knew there was something profound. We got together some other moms, and we just started pouring into the community, and we started offering gift cards for gas or for basic needs like a mother would.

**00:01:33:01 - 00:02:02:02**

**SARA CUNNINGHAM:**

And that started the first Free Mom Hugs chapter in Oklahoma City. What I love about having the chapters where they're out is that what California needs is different than Kentucky. We have 50 chapters. Every state has a chapter. We welcome moms, dads, friends and allies, whether it's showing up at pride festivals with a banner or preparing care packages for the community who might be feeling alienated.

**00:02:02:08 - 00:02:06:20**

**SARA CUNNINGHAM:**

We provide educational resources to civic faith and business leaders.

**00:02:07:06 - 00:02:20:07**

**JOEL GEMINO:**

What Free Mom Hugs can really do is show the possibility that you can still have family in your life that love you even if the ones that you're living with right now aren't showing that.

**00:02:20:20 - 00:02:23:17**

**ALEXSIS GLENN:**

And I just wish I had that growing up, you know? And I didn't.

**00:02:23:18 - 00:02:34:06**

**JESSICA-JEAN DE LA VEGA:**

Especially for these queer and trans youth. I was one of those youth back in the day. I was homeless for three and a half years. All of a sudden meeting, Free Mom Hugs and having that hug and having someone validate my identity.

**00:02:34:23 - 00:02:58:15**

**SARA CUNNINGHAM:**

To have the support of Grant Thornton to be a Purple Paladin will allow us to support our chapters to grow our group of allies and to really make a difference in the world around us. Just one person. You could be that one person. I'm that one person. And what a difference one person can make.



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