



# Lady Gaga starts foundation to fight bullying, empower youth

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**New York (CNN)** -- Pop star Lady Gaga stepped up her battle against bullying Wednesday, announcing the creation of a new foundation aimed at empowering youth. In a statement, Lady Gaga called the Born This Way Foundation a "passion project" that she will direct with her mother, Cynthia Germanotta.

"Together we hope to establish a standard of bravery and kindness, as well as a community worldwide that protects and nurtures others in the face of bullying and abandonment," Lady Gaga said.

The non-profit charity -- named for a hit Lady Gaga song -- will support programs and initiatives that empower youth, a statement announcing the foundation said, "by addressing issues like self-confidence, well-being, anti-bullying, mentoring and career development and will utilize digital mobilization as one of the means to create positive change."

The John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the California Endowment and the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University are also part of the effort, which will officially launch next year.

An advisory board and more details about the organization will be announced soon, the statement said. In September, Lady Gaga said she was aiming to make bullying illegal after the suicide of bullied teen Jamey Rodemeyer.

The 14-year-old was found dead outside of his parents home in Buffalo, New York. Rodemeyer, who'd been harassed at school because of his sexuality, counted Gaga as an inspiration. He said in a video he recorded as part of the It Gets Better campaign that he'd found solace and encouragement in the pop star's message of self-acceptance.

Following the teen's death, Gaga tweeted, "The past days I've spent reflecting, crying, and yelling. I have so much anger...It is hard to feel love when cruelty takes someones life....Bullying must become illegal. It is a hate crime. I am meeting with our President. I will not stop fighting. This must end."

CNN's Breeanna Hare contributed to this report.